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LETTE

OF

MARY RUSSELL M

SECOND SERIE

EDITED BY HENRY C

IN TWO VO

VOLUME I.

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LETTERS

OF

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

VOLUME I.

LETTERS AND LIFE

OF

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD.

SECOND SERIES.

PREFATORY.

THE first series of Miss Mitford's letters, which has been so cordially received, could not have been placed in better hands than those of their writer's old and tried friend, the late excellent Rev. W. Harness—the friend, not only of Miss Mitford, but of almost every genial man and woman belonging to the English world of literature and art during nearly half a century—by his knowledge, discretion, and delicacy, eminently fitted for the task. When he was arrested in his labour, by failure of health, he naturally called in the aid of a deputy, the Rev. A. G. L'Estrange, to arrange and present such a mass of heterogeneous papers as has hardly ever been thrown into the hands of an executor.

All that could be done by Mr. L'Estrange was done, and he is cordially to be thanked, as one of a younger generation, for having, to the best of his ability, carried out Mr. Harness's instructions in face of difficulties stated in the preface.

As one of Miss Mitford's oldest surviving literary friends, I have been invited to edit this second collection of her letters; and have accepted the task, not merely from my conviction of the interest and vitality of the material, but because of my earnest desire to offer a statement of matters regarding their writer's real position, which I am satisfied was not sufficiently understood during her lifetime. I believe that there is no living person who can be hurt by the whole story being set forth as explicitly as words can tell it.—This was not thoroughly done in the preface to the first series of letters. Its excellent writer, I must think, erred on the side of forbearance; forgetting, possibly, that when such virtue is carried too far, right may be left unprotected, and wrong glossed over.

What was told in an article which appeared in a leading review, at the time when the first series of Miss Mitford's letters appeared, I repeat here; under conviction that the facts cannot be too clearly impressed on all those who are concerned in the protection of womanhood and the honour of literature.

The sorrow—the disadvantage—the mistake of Miss Mitford's life should be clearly unfolded. Hers was the story of a credulous woman sacrificing herself to an utterly worthless idol—told over again, but with some difference from its usual formula. There is no survivor who can be pained by the plainest statement of the present case.

Dr. Mitford, the father of Mary Russell Mitford—belonging to an ancient family in the north of England, educated to be a physician—a personable man, with that frankness of manner and willingness

to take indulgence which, with too many persons, pass for the geniality which gives pleasure, and the generosity which bestows real benefits—was a robust, showy, wasteful profligate—a man whose life was a shame; whose talk was too often an offence, not to be tolerated in our days, when men have advanced beyond the brutish themes and language of Parson Trulliber's and Squire Western's table eloquence. He was a schemer in bubble companies—a gambler in London whist clubs. Nevertheless, Dr. Mitford managed to keep a hold on the women of his family as oppressive and as noxious as the load laid by the Old Man of the Sea on the shoulders of Sindbad. He married an heiress—a gentlewoman, nobly connected, older than himself, and somewhat characterless, so far as can be gathered from these records. —He speculated on, and squandered, her liberal fortune.—Yet she never repined. By one of those chances which, if met with in one of Balzac's novels, would be pronounced forced and theatrical, his daughter became the possessor of an enormous lottery prize—twenty thousand pounds. That sum of money, too, sufficient to have reinstated himself and his family in their old position, Dr. Mitford gambled and muddled away in an inconceivably short period. And from that time forth, to the end of his days, Miss Mitford was the "bread-winner"—had to provide the funds required to satisfy her parent's sensual rapacity, and to uphold him among those who knew, from intimate contact, how gross, how worthless, was her idol—with something of defensive perversity and more of blind credulity. On the delusion, trenching on moral obliquity, of such

a devotion as hers, there can hardly be two opinions. But the discredit too heavily fell on the woman;—because she struggled for, and obtained, literary notoriety, and thereby was marked before the world. —The man has fallen into the kennel of just Oblivion.

It should be stated that the amount of Miss Mitford's share of enjoyment derived from her fortune and her gains was, from first to last, small and modest;—in some respects reduced to the verge of parsimony. Her tastes were simple; her solitary indulgence was in the maintenance of her tiny flower-garden, in which she was aided by every friend who approached her.—"It is fit," said Mr. Samuel Pepys, speaking of some new gown bought for his wife, "that the poor wretch should have something wherewith to content her." And no one who recollects the insufficient, meanly furnished labourer's cottage at Three Mile Cross—where the best of Miss Mitford's literary work was done—latterly, commenced only at midnight, after she had satisfied and amused her grasping parent by playing cribbage with him till he could no longer keep awake—no one familiar with the scrupulous economy, not to say shabbiness, of her attire—which gave her the air, in any brightly dressed crowd, of an old-fashioned, miserly humorist—could grudge her, whose life was one long tale of strain and self-denial, her geranjums and that shabby greenhouse parlour and the great bay tree, beneath and round which so many distinguished persons have congregated to talk of matters far above and beyond the petty gossip of a country neighbourhood, or the private trials and

sacrifices of their gifted hostess. Rarely, if ever, did she betray the slightest passing irritation and impatience—the slightest consciousness that she was selfishly overworked and unjustly treated. The blindness, whether real or affected, with which she chose to assume that her distasteful parent must be as delightful to every one of her guests as to herself, had its absurd side; but it is only another illustration—perhaps as strong a one as could be cited—of the force of Woman's affection. There is no need to point out how, in other relations, she will sacrifice herself to the most tawdry and inconstant being on whom she is ready, even unto death, to waste her heart's treasure of love; but here was a long martyrdom, unaccompanied by any apparent compensations, save such as existed in the imagination of the victim. If Miss Mitford was thought to be exacting and craving, in her later days, in order to supply the wants of an old selfish father, who had squandered two fortunes, and who was willing that she should be shamed, if only she procured for him luxuries—she stands entirely apart from such literary women as have gone astray or have intrigued for advantages and indulgences to themselves—not a few of whom have risen into the glory of fashionable sanctity. Homely looking, meanly dressed, her worst and only fault was that she would not—possibly could not—control the vampire influence which drained her life of comfort and partly of credit.

Mary Russell Mitford was born at Alresford, in Hampshire, in December, 1787, and gave early signs of precocity in memory, in quickness, and in

avidity to learn. Her father used "to perch her on the breakfast-table," when she was only three years old, that his guests might be edified by her readings "from the Whig newspapers of the day!" and by her reciting "The Babes in the Wood." She was little more than eight years of age when the family had to pay the penalty of his shameless extravagance by taking refuge with him within the walls of the King's Bench. From this disgrace they were delivered by the little girl's luck in the lottery; the ticket which turned up a prize having been purchased at her instance as to its number. In the year 1797 the Mitfords were again in the country;—established not far from Reading, with carriages and horses and greyhounds,—their daughter having been placed at a fashionable boarding-school at Chelsea, kept by a pair of French emigrants, assisted by an English lady, who conceived herself a poetess, and took her pupils to the theatre.—As a part of their course of tuition, they danced ballets and acted meek plays—as Miss Mitford has told us in her whimsical account of a "breaking-up" performance of Hannah More's "Search after Happiness."—The girl would learn everything except Music, which she could never be brought to relish,—she read all manner of books, trashy and solid, with insatiable avidity; she wrote letters which showed no common talent. She left school in the year 1802. About this time her father entered on the second act of his mad career by buying an estate at Grasely, a few miles from Reading, on which stood an old picturesque farmhouse. This, of course, had to be pulled down and a modern house substituted,

on the building of which a needless sum of money was sacrificed. The sequel will surprise no one. After a few showy years, during which Dr. Mitford, who was proud of his daughter, took her into Northumberland, on a visit to his family (the incidents of which, including a thoughtless and selfish vagary in his deserting her for an electioneering freak, are spiritedly described), the bubble again burst. The year 1811 found Dr. Mitford in prison, and his wife and daughter writing to him to suggest expedients for his extrication. Strange to say—one confession of a later period excepted—they never seem to have wavered in confidence and affection, and never to have bemoaned the lot which tied them to one so worthless and so reckless. From Bertram House the family had to condescend to a way-side cottage at Three Mile Cross, in the neighbourhood of Reading. There the best of Miss Mitford's books and dramas were written, and there she resided till within a very few years of her death. She never murmured at its smallness and shabbiness; she had to work incessantly to provide comforts for her gentle fading mother, and indulgences for her reckless, faithless father; but it was there that her real powers were matured and perfected. She was used to say that she would never have put a line on paper had she not been driven to it by necessity. This, however, may have been an affectation, or (to be more lenient) self-delusion—or else that confession of the nothingness of Fame which has been common to many men and women of genius who have achieved distinction. Yet it was no slight privilege to be able to attract to herself the most

gifted persons of her time; to succeed in one of the most hazardous and arduous walks of literature and poetical art—acted tragedy; and to create a school of minute home-landscape painters in pen and ink analogous to that of the Cuyps and Hobbimas of the Low Countries. Her relish of society, of literature, of scenery, became deeper, more delicate, and more catholic, with every year as it passed. These compensations bore her through an amount of toil, endurance, and ever-gnawing care which would have worn down into the grave any woman of a less elastic spirit and less real power—long ere the day of her departure came.

The letters regarding the production of Miss Mitford's four successful tragedies—"The Foscari," "Julian," "Rienzi," and "Charles the First"—are yet another contribution to the story of the complaints and difficulties of dramatists; yet another testimony to the fascination with which the theatre, that "loadstone rock" (to borrow one of Mr. Charles Dickens's happy expressions), attracts authors of a certain taste and temperament, be they ever so conversant with a history of vicissitude, intrigue, vanity, and uncertainty, as old as the playhouse itself. There are, besides these, three tragedies — a "Fiesco," an "Inez di Castro" (twice in rehearsal), an "Otto of Wittelsbach," and an opera, "Sadak and Kalasrade," written for an inferior musician, which was only once performed.—Wretchedly played and sung as it was, it hardly deserved a better fate.—The music, by a now forgotten pupil of our Academy of Music, was heavy and valueless, and the dramatist, though graceful and fresh as a

lyrist, had not the instinct, or had not mastered the secret of writing for music. The difference will be at once felt by any one who compares Miss Mitford's songs with the delicious airs and choruses which give so much beauty to Joanna Baillie's tragedies.

From the time of her mother's death the weight which Dr. Mitford had divided between two forbearing women had to be borne by one. No one can wonder that the ceaseless and unreasonable claims on her time, already adverted to, and the merciless forestalling of every guinea which could be wrung from her, by one whose selfishness grew as time went on, bore with increasing weight on the health of a woman no longer young, and on creative power, which required some aliment better than a sense of duty prompted by self-delusion. The strain told on her writings. She began to repeat herself, to finish less carefully than formerly. Yet she had her compensations. Though overtaxed and imprisoned by the miserable being whom she tended lovingly to the day of his death, and whom she survived only a few years, she retained most of her staunch and generous friends who were distinguished in literature and art to the last. She added to the list new ones, who will not be readily forgotten—to name only one,—Mrs. Browning. When it came to be understood that her father's exactions, followed by his long illness and death, had involved her in pecuniary difficulties, some of the noblest and best persons of England, rallying round her, without undue publicity, ministered immediate and sufficient relief to her anxiety. A pension, from the limited sum at the disposal of the Ministry, was accorded to her, with

the most cordial recognition of her claims. But all this came, so to say, but a few brief hours before sunset and the long night.—Her health had been irretrievably impaired during the years of pain and labour described, and sunk slowly.—She was compelled, by the falling to ruin of the cottage at Three Mile Cross, to remove to a less comfortless home at Swallowfield, a few miles beyond it. There her death, hastened by a carriage accident, took place on the 10th of January, 1855. "The coffin was laid in a place in the churchyard of Swallowfield selected by herself, and the spot is marked by a granite cross, which was erected to her memory by the contributions of a few of her oldest friends."

Thus much of the woman's private life, and of the circumstances under which her works were produced A few words may be added in reference to their quality and twofold nature.—First, as to her prose writings;—her pictures of rural life and scenery. "Our Village," which may be said, without caricature, to have become a classic, and to have set the fashion in literature of a series of sketches of home scenery and natural life—akin to the woodcuts of Bewick, or the etchings of Read of Salisbury—will bear return and reprint, so long as the taste for close observation and miniature painting of scenery and manners shall last. It was probably, like many another creation of the kind, begun by chance; its writer being led on from picture to picture, from conceit to conceit, from character to character, as her work proceeded. To compare less things with greater ones, the Spectator's Sir Roger de Coverley may have originated in the happy thought of some happy

moment, containing within itself a germ of life and individuality. So, too, some of Christopher North's interlocutors, whom, in spite of some exaggeration, we distinctly know and willingly entertain as household friends, may have been brought into the world at random. There is no possibility of carrying out —to any length—a false idea in fiction or in life— That "Our Village" created a school of female writers, going before the public on the strong and safe ground of observation truthfully recorded, cannot be questioned. There is no need to name the copyists in question, since neither pleasure nor duty is performed in depreciating by comparison;—but in the interest of chroniclers to come, stress may be laid on one quality which recommended Miss Mitford's village sketches from their first appearance—the singular clearness and purity of the language in which they are written. When we think of the dashes, indications, epithets falsely misapplied, makeshifts in point of grammatical construction which are to-day tolerated—we come to understand, in part, how men of high scholarship and various acquirement at once recognised the unobtrusive (but in their finish complete) contributions which came from a Berkshire village. They may be laid by, but they will not, we predict, be forgotten.

Miss Mitford's tragedies are less easy to deal with. As a group, the female dramatists are well worth considering; the list including such widely differing celebrities as Afra Behn, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle, Susanna Centlivre, Mrs. Cowley, Fanny Burney, Hannah More, Joanna Baillie, Barbarina Lady Dacre, Felicia Hemans;—not to speak

of Mrs. Gore, with her prize comedy, Miss Landon, the Princess Amalia of Saxony, Madame de Girardin (whose "La Joie fait peur" contains one of the few stage inventions of modern time), and Madame Dudevant, who has succeeded in planting French country life and peasant manners on the Parisian stage.—It would be hard to name one of the sisterhood who planted her foot on the boards so firmly as Miss Mitford, and who gained and maintained her successes in a manner so honourable to herself.

Her four plays—the "Foscari," produced under the tremendous disadvantage of what might have been thought rivalry with Byron—"Julian," more romantic—"Rienzi," more clear, powerful, sustained (and as such gracefully complimented by Lord Lytton, in the preface to his best historical romance)—"Charles the First," in spite of the tremendous difficulties of its subject—all made their mark at the time of their appearance. The best of them, "Rienzi," may reappear; should the Fates resuscitate poetical tragedy. These tragedies were all warmly greeted, and the greeting came more warmly from none than from female dramatists. Mrs. Joanna Baillie, whose "De Montfort" had the rare advantage of being interpreted by Mrs. Siddons, and her less glorious, but still glorious, brother, John Kemble;—and whose "Henriquez"—a tragedy produced more than a quarter of a century later—contains one of the strongest and most original situations existing in any play ancient or modern; a woman who loved and who wrought for, the stage,—Mrs. Hemans, whose "Vespers of Palermo" failed—to name the two most distinguished

poetesses out of a long list—were both eager in their expression of welcome and sympathy. This cannot have been grimace in place of reality; no manifestation having been called for. It tells well for both the givers and the receiver of the praise. One so catholic and cordial as Miss Mitford generally was in admitting the excellences of writers so widely apart one from the other as some of her favourites, was only justly repaid by the kind construction of her rivals and contemporaries. Let it be added in conclusion that she was neither egotistic nor arrogant in producing herself and her works, as themes for conversation with her admirers, some of whom (may it not be said?), especially those from America, desired nothing better than to assail her with an incense of compliment, though high-flown, sincere enough to have turned a weaker head than her own. When we think of Madame D'Arblay's diary, which, bright and clever as it is, is in too many of its pages little more than a hymn in her own praise, sung at "the request of friends;"—when we think of the complacent accounts which Hannah More's letters contain of what the success of her "Percy"—so justly styled by Mrs. Thrale "a foolish play"—Miss Mitford's propriety, "which" (as Horace Walpole put it) "is a grace when all other graces have fled," rises by retrospect and comparison. It is not a genuine love of letters that will save its owner from foolish self-occupation; but the absence of such spirit in man or woman who has earned distinction makes them endearing no less than admirable.—We believe that few who consider such an example as this in conjunction with the revelations of hard, and it

might have been assumed, enervating trial, set forth in Miss Mitford's correspondence, will fail to value such an abstinence from self-glorification as something not common in the world of letters, and especially in the quarter of it inhabited by those whom one Jonathan Oldbuck scornfully called, "the womenkind."

The above is a Man's view of a woman of genius untowardly placed and unfairly misunderstood, who fought through a life of ceaseless anxiety, supported by one of those fond delusions, embraced and clung to as realities—through good and evil—in defiance of right and wrong, which only those of her sex can retain. It is fair, however, that a Woman's statement of the case should be given; and this I am enabled to do, owing to the kindness of one of Miss Mitford's accomplished friends commemorated in her "Literary Recollections"—Mrs. Acton Tindal. Nothing more genial, more affectionate, than the note I am permitted to subjoin, could be conceived. The apologetic tone in which a cheerful, shameless old libertine is spoken of, because his daughter clung to her delusions, must not be misunderstood as implying sympathy or excuse for what is coarse, and gross, and tyrannically selfish. It is merely another illustration of a fact not hard to be proved, that whereas Woman's instinct divines with a rapidity which few men can command, it divines, too often, without competent knowledge of what really make up the habits, and temptations, and indulgences of Man's life. Hence (an inevitable consequence) come pleas for the sinner, and insufficent appreciation of the virtue, which by its sufferings and sorrows, screened the sin.

The matter is one well worth weighing—the case ought to be stated from the mouth of more than one witness.

A Note on Miss Mitford.

Mary Russell Mitford had entered her fiftieth year when we first met in 1836. Her reputation as a dramatist had been long established, and the best of her village stories had been written. A large number of her literary admirers could not rest contented with the facilities which the post office afforded. They travelled far (and those were not the days of railways) to obtain a personal interview with the author whose cheerful healthy tone never led them to suspect that her time was often deeply pledged to the publishers and the claims at home, so heavy on her strength and spirits, that she could ill afford the hours devoted to what she called "unanswerable letters," and complimentary visitations.

Very few persons ever went forth disappointed from the narrow, comfortless presence-chamber of the plain, grey-haired lady, who beamed upon her guests from "that wonderful wall of forehead,"* and welcomed them so cordially with a most admirable voice. Her conversation possessed the charm and ease which the world has recognised in her letters. Her gentle wisdom and generous sympathy, her tact and shrewdness, the variety and extent of her information, her sense of humour, and original turns of thought and expression, will never be forgotten by those who had the privilege of knowing and

* This expression was used by Mr. Hablot Browne to describe Miss Mitford's brow.

conversing with her. Her choice and use of words when speaking was as happy and correct as her style of letter-writing—spontaneous, and needing no revision—offering a remarkable contrast to her habits when working, with equal success, for the press; and to the maxims which she always laid down, emphatically, when advising her young literary friends. "Easy writing is very rarely easy reading. Remember, that prose requires higher finish than verse. It is more difficult to do. Remember that to the very last I used often to write a story over four and five times, and I believe that my little reputation is owing to that painstaking. I am sure that the duration of that reputation is."

A few months later in the same year, 1836, I wrote to ask her opinion and advice. She replied with prompt kindness, and a correspondence commenced, which was maintained between us, and terminated only with her life. In her great sympathy and goodness she bestowed upon me many hours of her valuable time, and occasional meetings in the course of those eighteen years refreshed our personal interest in each other. Her letters must in more than one respect be ranked among the curiosities of literature. She could not readily make an end when writing on any favourite subject. "Now let me talk to you about this book, or that author," was a common phrase in her correspondence.

No woman was ever less self-conscious than Miss Mitford, or less addicted to small vanities and selfish ambitions; she was curiously, almost unfortunately, ignorant about all matters of dress, and in general perfectly indifferent on the subject; yet now and

then an occasion would arise when she believed that her engagements required some head-dress more elaborate than the simple motherly cap, trimmed with grey or white ribbons, in which her friends knew her best. When this sense of social duty oppressed her, she found it very difficult to arrive at any successful arrangement. Something would go wrong with the unnatural finery, and on one special occasion dear Miss Mitford forgot to remove the shop-ticket from the border or bow, where it dangled throughout the evening in a very conspicuous manner. To her unfortunate ignorance on such matters we owe the destruction of an excellent likeness of herself, taken by Mr. Lucas, and frequently alluded to in her published letters. He was then very young as an artist, and when summoned to Three Mile Cross, he felt that his experience as a portrait painter hardly warranted him in insisting on an alteration in the elaborate attire which his sitter had selected for the occasion, and with which she was evidently naïvely pleased.—Her kind friend Lady Madalina Palmer had been consulted,—they had laid their heads together on the subject of costume—and instead of wearing the simple cap, and the soft lace cape folded over the dark dress she usually wore, Miss Mitford was induced to accept the loan of a large black velvet hat, surmounted by a plume of white ostrich feathers, and a gorgeous cloak of gentianella blue, lined with white satin. Thus invested, our dear old friend sat to the secretly demurring artist for what proved to be, so far as the head and face were concerned, an excellent likeness, though the plumes and mantle of the

Duke's daughter spoiled the picture, so strangely were they out of keeping and unbecoming on the head and shoulders of the careworn literary gentlewoman. The artist fretted over the bad taste of these sumptuous and unnatural accessories, at last cancelled the picture in a fit of desperation, and went down to Three Mile Cross to pacify Miss Mitford by painting and presenting to her a portrait of her father.

Miss Mitford has said, in the sketch of her old nurse, "dear Mossy," that the loss of a certain characteristic softness of face is one of the worst penalties a woman pays to age." But Time touched her very tenderly. The features which she called "hard" and "coarse" always remained womanly, and very early became venerable. The patiently borne troubles and labours of her life early traced their lines and set their seal upon her benignant countenance.* She loved to look out of her own lot upon the sunny side of nature and human things. She begged her literary friends to write stories that ended happily;*—yet there was a very pathetic expression about her mouth, and in her large, slowly-moving, sad grey eyes, though they lighted up every now and then with a glancing gleam of the drollest humour, which greatly assisted the impression she made on her hearers when telling an amusing story, or describing a ludicrous trait of character.† She always looked fully at the person she was addressing for a time; her eyes did not shrink

* Yet she delighted and excelled in the gravest and most serious walk of imaginative literature—Tragedy.—H. F. C.

† Her laugh was broad, cordial, most pleasant in its merriment no less than its music.

from meeting those of another, but they had an odd trick of drifting aside, and it seemed as if she were gazing far beyond the walls that surrounded her. Deville, the phrenologist, pronounced her head to be larger than the average male head. He said that it offered the greatest illustration he had ever met with of the strange science of phrenology. On each side of those massive temples lay thick short grey curls of an infantine delicacy of texture. One little coil of silvery brightness lies before me: it was severed after death from her forehead, and sent to me by her friend and medical attendant, Mr. May of Reading. The grand head, and the exquisite fineness of the hair, that faded so early, always seemed to me sadly significant indications of the disproportion between her large intellectual powers and her suffering, and tender physical constitution and nature. I can well believe that her dear and venerable countenance wore, as she lay in her coffin, "such an expression of intense repose, and peace and charity, as no living face had ever known."

It should not be forgotten that more than thirty years ago Miss Mitford was an earnest advocate for the education of the people. She was far-sighted and thoroughly consistent in her liberality; and she was often called upon to maintain her opinions against those of many good and valued friends and neighbours dwelling in the country houses and parsonages of Berkshire. It was her fate to meet with many opponents so stout, that even if they *could* have been convinced, they *would* not have believed. "I am sure that in these days education is imperative," she wrote, on the 13th April, 1845—and to the utmost of her

power she assisted the great cause which she felt it to be her duty to advocate. Amongst her neighbouring opponents, and very good and valued friends, was the wife of an influential old-fashioned clergyman, of the highest high and dry churchmanship and ancient Tory school of thought. This lady was a Bishop's daughter, and in the habit of delivering her opinions with authority. Against many modern notions and innovations she believed it to be her privilege to protest — above all against the education of the lower orders. Such a measure seemed to her fraught with dangers most radically injurious and revolutionary. In her opinion, Miss Mitford and her friends were inciting and inviting a contented peasantry to make a second and most deadly meal on "the forbidden fruit."

"They are bad enough as it is," said Mrs. ——; "but what will they be when you have educated them?"

"Better," was Miss Mitford's response.

"Worse," that of her friend.

Soon after this conversation a successful raid was made on the neighbouring orchards. A fine booty of pears and apples was "lifted," and a very heavy contribution levied on the gardens of the Rectory. Some school-going and reading and writing delinquents were detected with the spoil in their possession.

"Now, Miss Mitford," cried the Rector's wife, "what can you have to say for those wicked little urchins that you are so fond of, and whom you and your friends are educating? They have almost stripped our orchard!"

"Ah, dear little creatures!" said Miss Mitford, smiling in her most benignant manner. "Dear little creatures! I know they are very fond of fruit!"

The happiest hours of Miss Mitford's life were spent in her walks and garden, and she has bequeathed to us something of the fragrance, beauty, and sunshine of those long past summer rambles, in many of her village sketches, and especially in some of those eloquent passages which she called "Rhapsodies," that occur in her recently published letters.

Dr. Mitford was known as "the kind *magistrate.*" Among the very poorest and most unfortunate of his neighbours he was dear also, as I believe a conscientious magistrate scarcely ought to be.—To the most incorrigible beggars around he was ever ready to give alms, in kind, from his scantily stocked larder. He would get out of his easy chair, and fetch the loaf, and slice or scraps, and present them, with his own hands, to these forlorn creatures and hopeless vagabonds. After dinner, on a winter's night, he would do this—in spite of the gout, when he was old and infirm.

A very characteristic conversation was overheard between Dr. Mitford and a young barrister who rose afterwards to considerable eminence. It was assize time at Reading, and a trial was coming on next day which excited great interest in the neighbourhood. It would be a question of life or death, and the prisoner, a friendless, ignorant countryman, was generally believed to be guilty; but the Doctor saw some extenuating circumstances in the case, which awakened his compassion. The young barrister was counsel for the Crown against the delinquent.

He was in great request as an advocate, and had been in court all day; and he was very sure to be there all the morrow, and to hear more than enough of this case, the details of which Dr. Mitford persisted in discussing with him over his wine. At last the young lawyer turned away, exclaiming hastily, "Well, Doctor, I cannot say that I feel much sympathy with these clodhoppers."

"Don't you indeed, sir?" cried the Doctor, drawing himself up.. "Then by —— I do!"

The sentiment, and the irreverent manner in which it was enforced, were perfectly characteristic of the speaker. Children and dogs loved the jovial old man; they could not detect his want of principle, and were charmed with his high animal spirits. The little people of a family circle would crowd round and upon him when he entered the room, jumping and climbing about him, till his grotesque antics, and the vivid "vermilion tinting" of his laughing face made the Doctor look something like a benevolent and handsome old Faun, who had been surprised and led away captive by a band of modern fairies. But however loud, or how deep soever the voice and the "vermilion tinting" became, nothing altered the views and opinions which Miss Mitford steadfastly maintained regarding this reckless person. She sat by smiling and indulgent, as if materially pleased to see him happy. The natural relations between the two seemed to be reversed; he was in fact her spoiled child,* and he accordingly imposed upon her

* While on the subject, I cannot but note the singular resemblance, in position,—nay, too, and in expression—between those of Miss Mitford and her father, and those of the doll's

patience and good temper, which never broke down, and hardly wavered under the many trials and inconveniences brought upon her by his extravagance and occasional intemperance. Miss Mitford would often relate some of his provoking and erratic proceedings. Their adventures, for instance, on a "shiny night," when they were returning home from a dinner party in their little pony chaise; how the Doctor had driven her aside into a ploughed field, where he permitted the pony to flounder and wander for a considerable time—while the true cause of the difficulty which her dear father seemed to have in finding his way out of the enclosure remained apparently quite unsuspected by Miss Mitford—who could not understand "the pleasure, the strange pleasure, that gentlemen do feel in the scent and taste of fine wine, especially when shared by a friend," as she added prettily when speaking of her father in a letter to Miss Barrett, dated November 20th, 1842. It seemed that the Doctor had dined so much too well, that he got into their little pony chaise only to drop out immediately on the other side, in a manner which admitted of no sober explanation. When he was able to resume his seat and to grasp the reins, Miss Mitford did not hesitate to set forth, under his guidance, on her return home, in perfect faith that they would arrive there safely in the course of the night.

She never lost an opportunity of ingratiating this profligate man with her friends. If we were literary

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dressmaker and her drunken parent, in Dickens's "Our Mutual Friend."—H. F. C.

aspirants, he was represented as taking a lively interest in our verse or prose. "A tear rose in his eye" when a token of kindly recollection, in the shape of a Christmas turkey, arrived at Three Mile Cross—and this emotion was not provoked by the excellent roast in prospect, so much as by the friendly remembrance of her and of him, as she tenderly explained.—A long forgotten paragraph met my eye the other day, in one of her letters, in which she assured me that *her* father had always regarded *mine* as "the model of a tolerant and Christian Whig clergyman."

Her father was not the only person whom Miss Mitford egregiously over-estimated, and unconsciously flattered. She looked upon her friends through rose-coloured spectacles; she exaggerated their good gifts and multiplied their graces; she hoped and believed great things of them.

In brief, her deep love of nature and sense of natural beauty, her cheerful, generous disposition, her happy imagination, her ever active intellect, never failed her through a very ailing existence, spent in a most comfortless home, and supported on very narrow means. At this great river of compensation she drank, and was not weary, even until the end.—Thus far Mrs. Tindal.

I must add a few lines respecting my share in these volumes. It has seemed to me indispensable, while editing this second series of published correspondence, to make many more omissions than would have been needful or discreet in the case of the former editors. Rich as these letters are in the variety of

the topics discussed by a woman, who may be said to have led a retired—though not wholly a recluse—life, they contain many repetitions and some few mistakes in fact and feeling, from which the reader may well be spared.

I would have omitted every passage in the correspondence where my own name occurs, had not this been rendered impossible by circumstances. I have been assured that my dear old friend changed her opinion of me, and that her regard for me cooled, during the later years of her life. This was not the case. Like all quick-witted women, and some quick-witted men, she may have said or written sharp things in a moment of petulance. I now hear of them for the first time. But a few hasty or sarcastic words, if such there were, or exist, count for nothing when set against long years of pleasant intercourse and good understanding. The dedication of Miss Mitford's "Records of Literary Life," and the fact that we were in perpetual communication till within the last three weeks of her life,—when, after seeing her, I did not, certainly (as has been told in one of her last letters), think the end so near at hand—are sufficient evidences to myself of her unbroken regard and confidence. Only those who are paltry in their friendships, and not sure of themselves, can be soured or shaken by any such poor and passing expressions of temper.

It was fit and fair that the domestics who attended on her should be kindly considered and liberally provided for. But it was not gracious (to say the least of it) that her large library should have been exclusively placed at their disposal, without the

bequest of a single book by way of remembrance to any one of those with whom she had been most intimate.—The recent unsuccessful attempt of these persons to claim the right of property in Miss Mitford's correspondence, has been told in our courts of law.

H. F. C.

LETTERS TO MRS. HOFLAND.

Bertram House, Oct. 4, 1817.

MY DEAR MADAM,

It is so impossible to refuse a request of yours —and a desire of Mr. Hofland's—that the enclosed sonnet arranged itself almost as soon as we parted. I have taken all this time to coax my vanity or my humility (which is the proper name?) into sending you anything so tame and uninspired. But I can do nothing better on the subject, not even with the aid of Mr. Hofland's delightful picture, which was, as you will see, far more in my recollection than the scene itself. Had it been the Ullswater picture it would have been another matter.

Papa returned home within ten minutes after your departure, regretting and bewailing himself, and scolding with a laudable impartiality the hares for not being killed, the common for being so far off—you for not staying, and me for not detaining you. Your next visit will, I trust, remedy all these grievances.

April 5, 1818.

My father is going, quite suddenly, to town, and I have only five minutes in which to thank my dearest

Mrs. Hofland for her charming letter; but five minutes are, as she knows, sufficient for me to say a great deal of nonsense—put quality out of the question—and I will write against time for any wager, not exceeding sixpence. To begin: I would give all the worlds one ever has to give to go with you and Mr. Hofland to Ullswater. Never talk of Paris; Paris to Ullswater is as a withered, faded, artificial flower to a root of fresh primroses. I have never had much fancy for France since Napoleon and the statues and the pictures were marched away—and my fancy for the Lakes, always very ardent, has sprouted most wonderfully since I have had my mind filled with a certain landscape, which shall be nameless; but I am very much afraid that both excursions are out of the question. The French one certainly is; for my Parisian friend having sent a most pressing summons, and pitched upon two mutual friends to escort me, papa was seized with such horror at the suddenness and unexpectedness of the movement, that he declared he could not part with me, and I should not go. And he says just the same about Ullswater. In the mean time I solace myself with the hope of seeing both you and Mr. Hofland here; we are very homely people you know, but you are sure of our hearts. You are very good in tolerating my Sonnet—that picture is in itself such sweet poetry, that even an attempt to describe it must catch some small portion of its charm, though I cannot forgive my verses for not having caught a great deal more. The moon should have been very bright when she had such a sun from which to steal her radiance. Such as it is, Mr. Hofland's directions respecting it shall be im-

plicitly followed. What you say of Charlotte Smith and Miss Seward is exactly what I have thought a thousand times. I wonder by what accident Miss Seward came by her fame. Setting aside her pedantry and presumption, there is no poet male or female who ever clothed so few ideas in so many words. She is all tinkling and tinsel—a sort of Dr. Darwin in petticoats. As to Charlotte Smith, she had, with all her faults, the eye and the mind of a *landscape poet* (may I use such a phrase—ask Mr. Hofland if it is not too presumptuous?), and her works have a double interest with me from her best descriptions being taken from the immediate neighbourhood of my birthplace. Her favourite residence, Brookwood, was within four miles of Alresford, the little town where my father and mother then lived. They knew her when her husband was High Sheriff of the county. What reverses she lived to see!

April 13, 1818.

Your letter, my dear friend, your most kind and touching letter, gave me a greater mixture of feelings than any I ever received. Pleasure at the anticipated visit of Mr. Hofland—grief for your illness—and anger at this tasteless money-loving world were the most prominent. Ah, Napoleon said truly when he called us "une nation boutiquière!" To think of that exquisite picture's going to Mr. Hart Davis, is enough to make one ashamed of one's country! But I still hope and trust that it will have a happier destiny. Its fame is so fully blown, that part of it

will inevitably fall upon the purchaser, and vanity is you know the only magic which can conjure money out of the pockets of these *soi disant* patrons of Art. I still hope that the "Jerusalem"* will belong to some one more worthy of such a possession. By a very singular concidence, the same post which brought your dear letter, brought me one likewise from Sir William Elford, written in Devonshire, but brought with him to town for a frank, in which he again speaks of Mr. Hofland's picture, and expresses a hope that he shall arrive before the Institution closes. He did not, however, arrive till the Sunday —just one day too late—so I have written to him and taken the liberty to promise that Mr. Hofland shall either call on him at Fenton's Hotel, St. James's Street, between half-past nine and ten on Thursday or Friday morning next, or that he shall send him a note informing him where the picture is, and authorising him to see it. I did not say a word respecting the purchase of the picture, or even that it was unsold; I thought it best that Mr. Hofland should say himself what he thought proper; nor do I know whether Sir W. Elford is likely to buy any more paintings—but I would not for the whole world miss the chance of such a purchaser; and at all events the good word of a man who is an acknowledged judge, and who lives in the part of England where art seems to be most valued, is worth having. It was on this ground that I ventured to make the appointment at an hour which I knew would be most convenient to Sir William. If I have done wrong,

* A well-known—and, in its time, greatly admired—landscape, by Mr. Hofland.—C.

I am sure my motive will be my excuse, both with you and Mr. Hofland.

I need not say how delighted we shall be to see Mr. Hofland. Can he come to us on Friday week? I am sorry to name so distant a day, but papa is obliged to go to town on Sunday, and cannot return before. He will call for Mr. Hofland in his dog-cart, and take him back Saturday morning, unless he can give us the pleasure of his company longer. If Mr. Hofland should be obliged to be at home before Friday, mama and I shall have great pleasure in seeing him Wednesday or Thursday—in which case he will have the goodness to write us a note: but papa would, of course, prefer Friday, to enjoy himself the pleasure of his company. You must prepare him for our homely ways, and our deserted great house, which always puts me in mind of the decayed old places described by Charlotte Smith. But he shall have violets and nightingales, and a hearty welcome. You must not forget, my dear friend, that next month we are to see you. Why cannot you come and meet your good man now?

I should like very much to prattle on to the end of my paper, but I am, or ought to be, at this very moment dressing for a fine, grand, disagreeable dinner party at Dr. Valpy's, and shall have the gig at the door before I am half ready.

* * * * *

Kindest remembrances from papa and mama. Poor papa's friskings to town are like yours, to the tune of a Chancery suit. Adieu! I hope and trust your arm will go on well.

April 25, 1818.

This is the first vacant moment that has occurred since I received your letter, my very dear friend, and I hasten to use it, that you may assure Mr. Hofland of our regret at not seeing him, and that we hope to be more fortunate another time; though it is possible that papa may be in Hampshire on the important business of giving a very amiable bride to a very old friend. But this is not certain, and, at all events, Mr. Hofland will, I hope, send to let us know when we may have a chance of the pleasure of his company. I wanted, too, to tell you and him how very much Sir William Elford is enchanted with the "Jerusalem." He had seen nothing like it, he said, in modern art, and must see it again. This he said not to me, but to papa. Papa's address, by the way, when in town, is the York Coffee-House, St. James's Street. He is so often there, and it is so much in the way when you or Mr. Hofland go to town, that I am sure you will call on him sometimes. But my chief motive for writing now, my very dear Mrs. Hofland, is to tell you with what infinite grief and sympathy I heard of the distressing nature of the operation you had gone through. Your writing so soon after the operation was one cause of this mistake, and that habit of yours to make light of all that touches you personally, and to suffer only in the sufferings of others, was another. I hope and trust that you are getting better and better. Pray get quite well as soon as possible, and then come to see us; change of air and scene will, I am sure, be good for you. You cannot possibly come to people who love you better.

Mama desires me to say this for her as well as myself.*

Miss J——† the lady whose elegance Mr. Hofland so much admired—has just left us. She is very desirous of knowing you, as most people are who have had the pleasure of forming an acquaintance with "The Son of a Genius." She will be in this neighbourhood, I hope, till the end of June. I am quite sure you would like her, she has so much dignity and softness, and playfulness and taste. We have been enjoying together the bad weather and the good nightingales, and beech-woods and wood-flowers in sunshiny days; Spenser and Jeremy Taylor in rainy mornings. Is not this pretty silliness?

Our poor friend Mr. J—— has had another smart touch of his old enemy the gout; he is, however, now getting about again. I shall see him, I suppose, at the May Fair, when, by old agreement, we dine at Dr. Valpy's. I shall always like Reading Fair for giving me the happiness of knowing you,

* I may as well here mention that, in editing these letters, I have not only made more omissions than the collectors of the former series thought necessary, but I have in most cases avoided printing in full the names of such among Miss Mitford's correspondents as were not expressly distinguished in literature and art. In the case of those who have come before the public, such reticence would merely be so much foolish affectation—C.

† This lady, like Miss Catherine Fanshawe, whose drawings and elegantly playful verses made her beloved and prized by all who knew her, appears to have been valued in no common degree by many whose good word was worth having. A few copies of a ghost story by her, the scene of which was Knebworth Park, were printed, but never published.—I cannot but think that this tale must have done her talents scanty justice; or else that her social and conversational powers must have been accepted as so many unperformed promises of literary distinction.—C.

my dear friend—you who spoil me so much, more I think, more than any one, excepting papa and Miss J——. Do you repent of your sins in this way? I am afraid you do not.

Do not write to me again whilst there is the slightest chance of its hurting your shoulder. I shall hear how you are through Mr. Hofland; and if you like my prattle, and I can get a frank, why I shall write again, without waiting for the ceremony of an answer. When you are quite well again, you will repay me a thousand-fold, in quality, at least, if not in quantity. Your letters are 1000*l.* bills, and mine are only shabby country one-pound notes.

* * * * *

Do read "The Fudge Family in Paris." I heard a little of it before I came to you at Twickenham. That style is, I think, Moore's forte. We have just been wading through what Miss J—— calls the Bishop of Llandaff's account of the Bishop of Llandaff.

Nov. 10, 1818.

All this time I have not had the grace to thank you for your kind and charming letter. I knew you must like Miss J——, everybody does; and from liking one soon gets to loving. You must tell me about her mother and sisters, whom I know only by her description. They are, I believe, very charming and excellent people. Did Miss J—— tell you of a Mrs. C——, the friend of Miss. J——, and of Mrs. Grant, of Laggan (whom I admire so much), and of

Mrs. West (whom, saving her presence, I don't admire at all), and of scores of other authoress ladies. Now this Mrs. C—— has been all over London to get your Monody on the Princess, and failing in this expedition she sent to borrow mine, to get it transcribed; and she is dying to make your acquaintance, and wants to know if you never come to town. She is a very clever, entertaining woman herself, of large fortune, and with no family; something of an oddity, of that sort of oddity that one calls vulgarly a *fidget* (don't tell Miss J—— I say so), and would retort upon you the fear that you talk of feeling towards clever women, by being frightened to death at the sight of you. I dare say you will meet.

I hope Mr. Hofland has brought scores of sketches, those lovely germs of pictures. I have a fancy (never, I fear, to be realized) to see a picture painted from beginning to end. It must be like seeing the flowers grow. Are we to have another "Jerusalem" this year? Anything to set young ladies a sonnetteering? I hope so.

Dec. 20, 1818.

Your very kind and charming letter, my dear Mrs. Hofland, gave me even more pleasure than your dear letters always do. It arrived on my birthday, and came upon me with something like the same delightful feelings that a smile and a kiss and a congratulation from the dear writer would have done. By-the-way, your kind felicitations on the lawsuit seem very well timed. We have gained our point—

at least we have not lost it. The decision of the Master of the Rolls is come at last; to be sure it sounds as little like a decision as can be, but it was all, our lawyers say, that we wanted. *Le voici*, "Let the matter be referred back to the Master,"—*e.g.*, the Master in Chancery—who had before decided in our favour, and against whose decision Mr. Elliott had excepted. So to him we are again going, and after some little squabbling on minor points—for to do our opponent justice, he will die hard: he will fight after he is beaten—after a proper war of words and parchment before the Master, we have some hopes of finishing this very tiresome business. I do not expect a termination just yet, because as you well know the Chancery lawyers follow very strictly the Horatian precept of making haste slowly; but of the final result there is now not the slightest doubt, and we are of course much less anxious than before. In the mean time, my dear madam, I am afraid I have no present prospect of having the pleasure of seeing you. Papa's next journey to town is very uncertain, and I cannot leave home at this time, even for such a temptation as that of keeping Mr. Hofland's birthday. I was never from home one Christmas day in my life, and it would make mama seriously uneasy if I were so now. We shall not fail to drink Mr. Hofland's health on that day, as well as yours. I am very glad you liked Miss N——'s sonnet. I have written to her and told her what you said. Do you know I am a little afraid in writing to her. She is very kind to me, but she cannot help being a little alarming; she puts one on the defensive, even when she has no inclination to attack. Partly this results

from her person. Did I ever describe her to you? Miss J—— calls her old-fashioned; Mrs. R—— calls her formal, and yet superficial observers would be likely to call her stylish and fashionable, for she is ever "point device in her accoutrements," but it is her manner and her face. Her features are Chinese, such as you see on an Indian screen, such as you might cut in wood or ivory on an Indian jar. She has no play of countenance, no laughter in her eyes, no sweetness in her smile. She has but one face: her complexion, fine as it is, contributes to this immovability, the red and white are both pure and both perpetual, her colour looks like a stationary blush. Her manner quite agrees with her face, and I am not sure that her mind is not something of the same sort—she is a sort of wax-work automaton—a machine of wit, admirably constructed and kept in exquisite order, but still a machine, though one that is well worth looking at and talking to. When we meet you shall certainly see both her and Mrs. C——, of whom, by the way, you seem to have formed a very correct idea. I am quite of your mind respecting the Americans—except one (who was a sort of lover of mine some seven or eight years ago—and who, by the way, had the good luck to be drowned instead of married): with that one exception I never saw an American gentleman in my life.* They are a second-hand, pawnbrokers'-shop kind of nation—a nation without literature, without art, and totally unconscious of the beautiful nature by which they are surrounded. No words are too strong to express

* How Miss Mitford lived to change her opinion of the Americans, her letters to come will show—C.

my contempt for them. I am even angry at their admiring "Blanche," though it is a great consolation to be kept in countenance by their equal admiration of your works. No, my dear Mrs. Hofland, I have not written a Monody on the death of Sir Samuel Romilly. Perhaps I felt it too strongly for the make-believe sort of feeling which tells best in poetry. Besides, as he was most certainly murdered by the mismanagement of his physicians (who gave him laudanum instead of bleeding and blistering him), and as one of those physicians (Dr. Babington) is the old and intimate friend of my father, I could not well have said all that I wished to say on the subject. For the rest Sir S. Romilly was certainly the victim of his own high fame. The medical attendants seemed to think him invulnerable even to physical ill; any other man would have been blistered, watched, and saved. There is no good in thinking on this dreadful subject, and to me there is a terrible indelicacy, considering their equally dreadful and so similar ends, in putting forward a son of Mr. Whitbread to succeed Sir S. Romilly. Our dear Miss J—— has been unwell since her arrival in Warwickshire, at least so she told me when she wrote me a week back. I don't think she will make any long stay. How much I long to see your dear little pet. But, my dear friend, I beg and entreat and conjure you not to give him an authoress-like mode of speaking of me; pray don't let him say the lady who sent papa a sonnet, but the lady who loves Tom, or the lady with the round face, or any other descriptive epithet that you may think proper. Poor Mr. —— has had the gout off and on for these three months, he looks shockingly.

He dined with us on Wednesday for a sort of take-leave visit. He is very melancholy. Papa says it is the prospect of going back to his wife. I believe she is rather an evil.

I have not read Lady Morgan's last book. What a fool she is to put Mr. Gifford in the right by writing a parcel of libels on him and his colleagues!—she had very respectable companions in the fair victims of the "Quarterly," I myself being one, but she will I hope have no one to keep in countenance her abuse. Have you read Hazlitt's "View of the Stage?" I have just finished it with great amusement, and am going to begin a very big as well as great work, Dr. Drake's "Shakespeare and his Times."—Oh! I forgot to tell you that my friend Mrs. R—— made acquaintance with Lady Morgan at Baron Denon's, when she was in France this last autumn, and liked her very much indeed.

Feb. 3, 1819.

Your very welcome letter, my dearest Mrs. Hofland, gave me double pleasure, from the hope it afforded me of seeing you here; and I write the sooner, to beg you will let us know when we shall have that happiness, that we may, by no chance, be from home. If you can give us two days' notice, papa begs me to say that he will have the pleasure of meeting you in Reading, and driving you over. I believe our dear friend Mr. Hofland will not be jealous, though the cavalier who is to run away with you is so handsome and not yet fifty-nine.

He and my mother are almost as much pleased as myself at the prospect of seeing you. I only wish your business was of a pleasanter nature. I am afraid the Duke of Marlborough speaks truth with regard to his concerns, poor man! Should the Oxford petition against General St. John succeed, Mr. H. Joy, an intimate friend of ours, will be brought in for the city, and the Duke's interest vanishes for ever. Papa says he will show the prospectus to everybody likely to subscribe,* and then leave it on the table at the Literary Institution.

Our poor dear Mr. P—— is not at all likely to purchase expensive books. He is as poor as Job, and as fond of planting and enclosing as the Duke of Bedford. I have, however, no doubt of that beautiful work selling certainly and well. The pretty little word which saluted Mr. Hofland's eyes on the corner of a picture the other day will undoubtedly stick to his pictures, and prints from his pictures as long as anything like taste remains in the world. I am sorry you did not see the drawings from the cartoons by Haydon's pupils. Mr. Haydon, in a letter I had from him the other day, speaks of them with his usual delightful enthusiasm. They were "Not copies," he says, "but translations, full of the life and spirit and vigour of their originals. When they can do so much with other men's thoughts, what will they one day do with their own?" I am sorry to find that he is not yet well enough to paint. He does not mean to attempt it till April. How much I envy your

* The work referred to was Mr. Hofland's views of "White-Knights," illustrated by Mrs. Hofland.—C.

guests the sight of Mr. Hofland's pictures. Even here, and by a long circumbendibus, I heard of those pictures, and of that morning. Miss Susan wrote to tell Miss J—— how much Emily had been delighted by the landscapes, and Mr. M—— by the conversation. You understand of course that Miss Emily is an amateur of good paintings, and Mr. M—— of good talk. I never saw him, I believe—at least if I did it was in one of Dr. Valpy's Tower of Babel parties long ago, and we took no notice of one another; or, more modestly speaking, he took no notice of me. I have not the slightest recollection of him. Some way or other, you reminded M—— J—— of Hannah More—I don't know how—but she is, you know, much more delightful in conversation than on paper. Winter and foul weather have kept me so much at home, that I have done nothing but read, and work, and write long letters. Have you read Fearon's "America?" You should. It would give you the pleasure it gave me. Nothing is more agreeable than to find one's preconceived notions of a place or people confirmed by a good matter-of-fact knock-me-down authority, like Mr. Fearon. He gives good reasons for old prejudices. Every America-hater should read Mr. Fearon. Then I have been travelling through twelve volumes of Burke's works. What poetry that man wrote and called it prose! Who but Burke could make old party politics, pamphlets, and speeches of fifty years ago, as fresh as yesterday? Then I have been laughing at "Nightmare Abbey," the pleasantest of all Mr. Peacock's works, whether in verse or prose, "Rhodo-daphne" and "Melincourt" included. I

have not met with a more cheerful or amiable piece of *raillerie.* The chief objects of his attack are misanthropical poetry and transcendental metaphysics (deuce take Mr. Peacock for putting me such hard words) in the persons of Lord Byron and my poor dear friend Mr. Coleridge—the last in particular fares most lamentably. Mr. Peacock serves him just as Sancho's Baratarian subjects treated their luckless governor—throws him down and then dances over his body. By all manner of means read "Nightmare Abbey"—the climax of praise—it is short. The last book I have read is "Florence Macarthy," which most assuredly is not short in any sense of the word; it is not only long but tedious. You know, of course, the *Dramatis Personæ,*—a hero, compounded of Buonaparte and General Mina; a hero, *en* second, Lord Byron; a villain, Mr. Croker; and a heroine, Lady Morgan herself;—this, with a plot half made of "O'Donnel" and half "Guy Mannering,"—a vast deal of incredible antiquarianism, and Ireland! Ireland! Ireland! as the one single sauce to all these viands,—forms the principal ingredients of this puffed-off novel. After all, Lady Morgan, if she would vigorously abstain from all French, bad or good, keep at a safe distance from that eternal Ireland (I would not trust her so near as Holyhead), and make up her mind not to allude to Napoleon—whom she is not worthy to admire—might write books worth reading and worth praising.—It seems to me, my dear friend, that I am in an impertinent humour to-night, and abusing my *betters* as if they were my worses. Well it is your fault:

you have put me in spirits by giving me hopes of seeing you.

Feb. 21, 1819.

I cannot, my dearest Mrs. Hofland, wait till a frank comes to me to thank you for your kind letter and your lovely verses, so I must write and send to some M. P. or other, who will have the goodness to put my letter in the small post. I must write, but how shall I thank? The charm of a goodly "copy of verses," as the phrase is, with my name at the top of them, is as little new to me as to other scribbling ladies; one has them by the dozen, by the fifty, by the hundred! But such stanzas—so sweet a landscape, so sweetly painted—is, indeed, an honour to receive. We are all charmed with their descriptive power, their truth, and their simplicity. I have long known what a proser you were, but I did not before know you to be such a poetess. I do thank you most sincerely, I assure you, and so do papa and mama. . . . You must not be so flattering about my stupid books—all of them written with more haste than good speed, very incorrect, very fine, very young. It is one's fate, I suppose, to write nonsense at eighteen and repent it at eight and twenty—at least, I know it is mine. Out of all those three alarming volumes there are only about two or three hundred decent lines—only about two or three hundred of which I am not ashamed—two or three common-places, and little bits of description in "Christina"—the six or seven first stanzas of

"The Sisters" (by-the-bye, don't you think the whole of that little thing, to say nothing of its shortness, less bad, much less bad, than the feverish, melodramatic, Miss Anna-Maria-Porter-ish, Mr. Phillips's speeches-ish "Blanche?")—the stanzas called "The Voice of Praise," the odes on Beauty and Sunset, and perhaps a few lines on Consumption in the Miscellaneous Poems.—Before I forget, let me tell you, my dear Mrs. Hofland, that having found another copy of these small pieces, mama requests your acceptance of the one you have. "Christina" and "Blanche" we cannot offer, not having another copy. No; I am never likely to write another line as long as I live, except a sonnet forced from me by admiration when I see a fine picture. Never! I have made a sort of mental vow not to exceed fourteen lines of nonsense at one time. Mem. (as old Aubrey says), I mean to send you enclosed a sonnet, addressed to Mrs. D——, a month or two ago.—Some day or other I may show you the only thing I ever wrote of which I am not much ashamed, the only thing which is healthy and lifelike (as Chaucer has it), a blank verse comedy in three acts; and when I show you that, and tell you its history, you will understand pretty well what sickened me of writing. Three times did I alter (*alias* spoil) that luckless play to please Mr. Arnold, and he wanted it altered a fourth! I fairly cut up my ten-syllable lines into songs to please him—"tagged my verses," as Milton said to Dryden, turned my comedy into an opera, and the man wanted me to lug in an additional plot; so I gave it up in a quiet sulky sort of passion, and have never written a line for publication since.

"Something too much of this." Did not you forebode, my dear Mrs. Hofland, when you set me to talking of myself, and set an authoress astilt on her own rhymes, that you would be fairly drowned in a flood of words? I will now be merciful, and talk of more interesting subjects.

No, my dear friend, do not forget our day at Farley Hill. It is remembered there, I assure you, with equal pleasure and kindness. Do not make Mr. Hofland fancy that you were brought in there by the head and shoulders, as Mr. Arnold wanted me to drag in an under plot: so far is this from being the case, that the only regret expressed by both is that they had not the pleasure of Mr. Hofland's company as well as yours, that the acquaintance is not quite complete, that the husband is not known to them as well as the wife. I saw my dear Mrs. D—— on Thursday, and she was full of the kindest recollections of you, the most friendly inquiries about your journey, and all your concerns. You must not wish to forget your visit to Farley Hill, unless you wish to forget us altogether, which vanity will not let me believe. What you say of its beautiful mistress is quite true, she is all that you describe; but is she not something more? The fine complexion, so delicate yet so bright; the look of pure glowing health, which distinguishes so many of the north country maidens, does not seem to me—though she possesses it in so high a degree—necessary to the beauty of Mrs. D——; a beauty which, in my mind, lies rather in form and expression, than in colouring, nobleness, purity, simplicity, high birth; these are the ideas which almost rise to my lips

when I look at this charming woman. I never think of lilies and roses, nor even of Titian or Guido, when I look at her; she is associated in my mind with different objects, the lofty palm, the stately cedar, a temple, a column, a statue; in a word, I would rather have her bust by Chantrey than her portrait by Haydon. I want Mr. Hofland to see her, that he may say which is right. But he should see her—you should see her—in that sort of full dress which is the touchstone of elegance, which misbecomes nine hundred and ninety-nine women out of a thousand—in all the lustre of satin and diamonds, with a splendid Turkish shawl wound in graceful folds round that finely-turned head. I do love to see her in her glory, that's the truth of it. Papa laughs at me—no, papa scolds, and you laugh at me —about Miss ——, but I could quite as little part with Mrs. D——. You will now understand why it is that I have so much pleasure in having made you acquainted. Apropos to Miss ——, I must beg and entreat and implore you never, by word or sign, or no word or no sign, to give, or allow to be taken, the slightest idea of papa's aversion to that dear, delightful creature. She must suspect that he does not like her, but I would not have the mother or sisters guess it for the world; they might not think my affection and admiration a sufficient recompense for such determined dislike. After all, it is only jealousy; but who, that did not exactly know his engrossing fondness for me, would suspect such a thing to be possible? You will forgive this caution, my dear and truth-telling friend. You are yourself so very candid and unreserved, the reverse of myste-

rious, that one is almost afraid of your dropping some hint; but I expect you to be very discreet indeed in all my affairs—my passion for Napoleon, and so forth. By the way, dreams always go by contraries. I shall not marry Sir W. Elford, for which there is a remarkably good reason, the aforesaid Sir William having no sort of desire to marry me; neither shall I ever marry anybody. I know myself well enough to be sure that if any man were silly enough to wish such a thing, and I silly enough to say "yes," yet a timely fit of wisdom (caprice some might call it) would come upon me, and I should run away from the church door. But though your dream be particularly untrue, and though I doubt Sir William's buying expensive books himself,—his library being rather large than grand, rather crammed with cheap editions than splendid with fine ones,—yet I shall certainly not fail to beg him to show the proposals and talk of the publication as much as may be. He talks as much as a woman, so he may do good that way, and visits everybody in that enormous county; in addition to which he is the kindest, cleverest, warmest-hearted man in the world, perfect in everything but not being in love with me. Papa begs me to say that he will make the best use he can of the prospectuses you have sent him. He has had one nibble already, but a good many of our county gentlemen hold back, in hopes of getting a copy from His Grace. Next week are the assizes, he is always on the grand jury, and will then take care to mention the book to every one likely to make such a purchase. You will not doubt his zeal. I do hope to be with you at the

time you kindly mention; to see that Cumberland Cottage rise from beautiful to most beautiful, would be a delight past all expression. Nothing but an absolute impossibility will stop me; and yet—but I will not anticipate grievances—at present I not only wish but hope to pass the first three or four days of April at Twickenham. If Spring continues to advance as it has begun, April will be quite Summer. We have primroses and violets in the hedgerows, and a week ago, while coursing in Lord Braybrooke's park, papa found a pheasant's nest with four eggs. Oh, I must come to see you all, and your sweet boy, and the beautiful picture—a home scene is of all painting that which touches me most, and a home scene by Mr. Hofland! Oh, I must come. Make our kindest regards to this dear master of yours, and kiss Tom for me. I intend to be a great favourite with him. Pray forgive this rambling letter, with its egotism, its tautology, its million of faults; it is such a letter as I could only send to a friend as kind as yourself. Ever, my dear Mrs. Hofland, most affectionately yours,

* * * * *

I got my shawl very safe. Pray, did you or Mr. Hofland ever read Forsyth's "Italy?" If not, pray do; by far the best book, ay, and the shortest, that has been produced on that most attractive but well-beaten subject. His pen really paints. Once more, good-night, God bless you. Let us hear whenever you have a spare moment.

March 18, 1819.

Foreseeing an opportunity of sending you a letter in a few days *viâ* London (the last note which was intended to have gone thither by papa, getting, like himself, no further on the way than Reading), I cannot resist thanking you, my dear friend, for your delightful letter, almost as soon as I have received it. We are very anxious, too, to hear of your perfect recovery, as well as Mr. Hofland's—these spring colds are terrible things, you must take great care of yourselves. I am very glad my journey is put off. May makes everybody well. So you have actually seen Miss ——! Mr. Hofland's compliments to my portrait painting came just as I was in a fit of repentance for that very specimen which he is so good, or so naughty, as to approve. She wrote to me the plan which was framed at your house, and her letter was so frank, so hearty, so irresistibly kind, that my heart smote me for every saucy thing I had ever said of her. I still agree with Mr. H. in thinking the picture a good likeness—she is all that I said, but she is something better and more. At first sight she is cold and stiff; with those who are unkind to her she is sharp and cutting; but you see that when light and air and warmth are let into her heart, it opens like a flower. That letter of hers came upon me like a kiss, so short, so sudden, and so affectionate—you yourself never wrote a more direct and pressing invitation. I will never say or think anything saucy of her again, nor of any one, if I can help it; and by way of keeping my resolution, I may as well begin to talk of our demagogue *par excellence*, Mr. Northmore. What did I tell you of him in that wee

bit of a note of mine? Surely there was not canvas enough for the man at full length—I could never have done him justice. Did I tell you that he was the Mr. Northmore who was not chosen for Exeter—the Mr. Northmore who made at Westminster so notable an oration in favour of the old ass Major Cartwright—the Mr. Northmore of whom Mr. Hobhouse said that he had come all the way from Devonshire to tell people he was a great man at home? Did I tell you he was a talker against time—loud and shrewd and full of himself, and sharp all over, from his eagle nose to his pointed boot toe?—a perpetual skyrocket, always bouncing, starting, and flaming?—an unremitting volcano, spiting forth by night and by day smoke, pebbles, cinders, fire, and all hissing matter? Did I tell you all this? and did I add that he is a poet?—author of a poem which must have appeared incognito, for I never heard of it; an epic poem, madam, about General Washington, to please our American tastes—an epic in blank verse, which the man has the conscience to expect me to read and admire? You will think he affronted me, but he did not, except by that modest assurance of his which affronts everybody—by a certain tone of impertinent protecting praise which he thought very flattering, and which gave me a violent fancy to box his ears; and by—last and greatest sin—a running accompaniment of "very pretty, very pretty, very pretty," with which he contrived to render Mrs. D——'s sweetest song rather worse than inaudible. Now good-bye Mr. Northmore—beau ideal of a democrat, I have done with you. He appeared to the greater disad-

vantage, too, from being accompanied by one of the most interesting old men in the world—a Northumberland man—an old friend of our family—one of those venerable persons who make age so lovely and so lovable; mild, cheerful, kind, and wise—smiling as brightly as my own dear father, and talking just as Izaak Walton would have talked if one had gone out fishing with him. I do wish you had seen Mr. J——. By the way, I picked up a great many stories from him. He lives at Marlow, and is exceedingly intimate with Peacock and Shelley, and acquainted with all the new school. He says the system of plunder exercised upon poor Mr. Shelley exceeds all belief. Leigh Hunt went to Marlow once for money, and finding Mr. S. without any family, took off a load of the good man's furniture—chairs and tables and bedsteads! Is it not incredible? And Mr. Godwin, his papa-in-law, was much worse; he used to threaten to stab himself if his dutiful son-in-law would not accept his bills. Only fancy him down on his knees, flourishing a drawn dagger and talking tragedy! It's really better than "Tom Thumb." But it was no joke to poor Mr. Shelley. He used to send for Mr. Peacock to protect him, and is fairly gone abroad to get rid of this fine grand sort of sentimental persecution. Well, great authors are great people—but I believe they are best seen at a distance. The Alps are only fit for the background of a picture, and not always for that. In the mean time we may amuse ourselves with their books. Pray, have you read a Scotch novel called "Marriage?"* If not, pray do. It's the very book for

* By Miss Ferrier.

an invalid, so very laughable and nothing else. There are three Scotch old maids and their married friend, who are just what novel personages ought to be, very new in books, and very old in nature. These are the cream certainly, but there is a great deal of comic talent throughout, and there had need. Nothing but the buoyant air-bladder of comedy would ever have floated the preaching and prosing of the second volume—the total want of interest from beginning to end, the interminable speeches, and that deadest of dead weights, the all perfect heroine. That is the heaviest millstone of all. A book laden with an impeccable heroine, ought to be covered all over with cork jackets, not to sink. Somebody has said that we never forgive perfection unless it be made thoroughly wretched. Now this damsel is not wretched in the least, she is a female Sir Charles Grandison, with no trials but the show off trials of duty—no cares but the tender cares of love. How I do hate those over-good book-people! They are just like triple refined sugar—sweet and bright and hard and spotless, and good for nothing till united with some ardent spirit or some powerful acid. Luckily I know how to skip (invaluable art, I wonder no one has written an essay on it), and Miss Grizzy and Miss Jacky make ample amends for the fair Mary's sins of wisdom and virtue. Grizzy's letters are past all praise—I prefer them even to Jacky's. Here am I talking of Miss N——, and Mr. Northmore, and novels, and such like baubles, and entirely forgetting the fine opportunity I have to show off, and look wise and grand, and critical and classical, and bluer than a blue bag. Mr. —— has finished his transla-

tions—those translations which have been forty years in hand—from Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, Petrarch, Ovid, and Virgil; and he has chosen me for his critic and auditress, upon the same principle, I suppose, that Molière chose his old woman. They only want *my* last revisal (there's for you!) to be printed at his private press; that is to say, twelve copies thrown off there, and then one sent to London, by way of MS., to be finely printed by John Valpy. This will strike you as much such a *cheap* plan as his Grace the Duke of Marlborough might pursue on a similar occasion—but money is of no consequence at ———. The translations are singularly fine—true to the words and spirit of the originals—and yet most purely English in their fine diction and their sweet and flowing versification. The "Ugolino" and "Isabella" stories are superb. These Italian people were my old and dear acquaintance. I can't say I was quite so intimate with the Latin gentlemen. I had read Dryden's "Virgil," to be sure—but it was a long time ago—and Mr. Ovid I had never met with in my life. I have now had the honour of an introduction to his tale of Phaeton, and I think him a very fine fellow indeed. He beats even Mr. Southey for magnificent nonsense. "Kehama" is pale and faded pink, compared to the glowing scarlet of the Metamorphoses. Virgil I dare not presume to praise. The voice of all the world has given him his rank on Parnassus; but I may safely quarrel with one whom there is no injuring, and to be sure that fourth Æneid would make any worm-feminine that crawls on the earth turn against him. That intolerable rascal, the pious Æneas! That abominable fool, the tender

Dido! My dear Mrs. Hofland, I have no patience with the man. He does not deserve such a translator as Mr. ——; he deserves only such an one as Mr. Beresford (the misery man*), who has produced, without knowing it, a travestie more perfect than Cotton's. *e. g.* In the midst of Dido's fine passion, where she talks of scattering the limbs of her faithless lover on the sea, of immolating his son, of slaying his followers, and so forth, Mr. Beresford makes her say, very quietly, "Why should I not kill the young Ascanius, and "*dish him* to his sire?" And all Oxford and half Cambridge subscribed to this translation? I don't suppose there is so fine a stroke even in "Washington," that masterpiece of Mr: ——'s heroics.

What could Mrs. J—— possibly say to you, my dear friend, to render forgiveness necessary? Something very hard, I am sure—very rude—very officious. Do tell me what. I have a notion this Mrs. J—— can be a little alarming sometimes. Mrs. C—— once, in telling a long rigmarole story, gave a bit of a picture of her which I have never forgotten. She was speaking of a morning visit in Cumberland Place, where she was with Miss J—— and another lady, "and then," quoth she, "just as we were at our merriest, in sailed Madam J——, like a tragedy queen, scolded us all round, silenced us, and put us to flight." My Miss J—— always speaks of her mother with a respect and affection which does great credit to herself, but I have no doubt that she can be disagreeable enough. I only wish she may take it into her head to give me a scolding. I have a snug little

* Author of the "Miseries of Human Life."

taste for impertinence, which I make it a point of conscience not to indulge unprovoked, but which it quite does me good to let loose when I see occasion; so that those who, presuming on a very undeserved character for gentleness and so forth, which I have got, Heaven knows how, undertake to preach to me, sometimes find themselves turned round in a very unexpected manner. Now, I take Mrs. J—— to be a person whom I should really like to toss. Do tell me what she said to you. I foresee I shall be obliged to give her a taste of my quality—only I should be sorry to vex her charming daughter. So you think this scourging will do Haydon good! I do not.—I am no disciplinarian; in my mind whipping is bad both for man and boy, and you should remember that in this present case the rod has been tried pretty often with no remarkably dulcifying power.—In short, *he* is himself the best authority, and I had a letter from him just after the first burst of success attending this exhibition, in which, with his characteristic *naïveté*, he talks of this gleam of prosperity as having softened him, and made him so good, that he forgave all his enemies, and even wished to lessen their mortification. And he is right—metaphysically right—in my opinion. Prosperity does sweeten, and Adversity does harden and fire up a noble character. The spoilt children of Fortune are generally more amiable, kinder, better-tempered than those whom she has cast aside. I know that this is just the reverse of the prevailing sentiment, which holds that misfortune is good for the mind, &c. &c.; but I don't mind a little opposition, as you know of old. I like to be in a select minority. Talking of minorities, I

shall be delighted to behold Mr. Hobhouse. The very sight of him marching down his garden, opening the little gate, turning into the road, will be a pleasure to me. To gaze on Mr. Hobhouse, I shall actually be guilty of the missy iniquity of watching at the window. This is not merely because he is Lord Byron's friend—not at all, indeed—but because he is Napoleon's defender. "Elle est folie de Buonaparte," Mr. D—— says of me, and the madness I am afraid is rather increasing than diminishing. But he is no common man this Mr. Hobhouse: accomplished, enlightened, firm, honest, bold—an author, an orator, and a man of fashion, who dares exile himself from his caste; who becomes, voluntarily as it were, a pariah, rather than betray the cause of the people. I have a great respect for Mr. Hobhouse. He is, I hear, to marry Miss Susan Burdett—the beauty, and the favourite. I believe this is certain.

Reading is in a great bustle of joy and triumph at Mr. Palmer's success. I am very glad myself—the man is a good sort of man (though I hate pensions), and, moreover, very useful as a franker in this unparliamentary neighbourhood. But the pension is a pension for all that. My politics are very unaccommodating; I cannot give up principles for men, not even for an intimate friend. You shall see the comedy, but you must not expect too much. It is as compared to very witty and humorous dramas, as a water-colour drawing to an oil picture. There is but one attempt at a comic character, and that attempt is a failure; neither is it at all sentimental. It is, rather tender, rather lively, rather delicate, and rather tiresome. This is a very true and impartial

character. As to writing a novel, I can't, I wish I could; nothing I should like better, it must be so amusing. I have begun two, and got on very well as long as I stuck to landscape and portrait painting; but when I was obliged to make my pictures walk out of their frames and speak for themselves, when I came to the action, I was foundered. In short, I lacked invention, so both my novels went into the fire, where I most heartily wish all my poems were keeping them company. It is not because Mr. Gifford abused me that I do not write, but because Mr. Gifford's abuse happened, for once in his life, to be right. Now, I don't say this to make you contradict me, and say civil things, but because I really feel it to be the truth, and beg of you not to say another word on the subject. I believe I ought to be very thoroughly ashamed of this quantity of nonsense, but you have persuaded me that my "chitter chatter" amuses you, and must take the consequence of your civility. I hope nobody ever hears a word except Mr. Hofland, of whose indulgence I am so secure. Kindest regards to him and to you from all here, not forgetting the lovely boy. Get well, and write and tell me so. Adieu, my dear friend.

P.S.—I hope this sad influenza has not put a stop to the Cumberland Cottage. I have set my heart on seeing that the glory of The Academy. Who is the man that has abused Mr. Haydon? Do you know? Is it the author of the "Catalogue Raisonné?"—and who is the author of the "Catalogue Raisonné?" I did know, but I have forgotten.

April 17, 1819.

I do not lose a moment, my dear friend, in expressing to you my deep regret at your continued indisposition, and answering, as well as I can, your questions respecting White-Knights. Ten days ago I heard that Lord Rivers had looked at the place, not I believe with a view to purchase, but to rent, and had declined having anything to do with it, in consequence of thinking the house damp, and disliking the trouble and expense of the gardens. So I suppose the Duke means to let it, and I am told from authority, which is, I believe, too good, that the books and pictures have been taken away by a person to whom they were mortgaged for a sum of money; I mean, who lent money to the Duke on that security, and has now seized on them for payment. The gentleman who told me this, told me he had seen the person who packed the books, so that I fear your splendid work will now be as terribly mortifying to the Duke's vanity, by describing what is no longer at White-Knights, as it would once have been delightful to him, from flattering the same passion. I tell you this, my dear friend, plainly and at once, because I agree with you in thinking that Mr. Hofland ought to know as soon as possible what he has to trust to. Papa was gone to Reading before your letter arrived, and is not yet returned If he tells me anything farther, I will add it in a postscript. You will not, I am sure, doubt our sympathy with all your illness and your wrongs. Don't make any excuse for the Duke of Marlborough. I can't bear to talk of him, so I will take another and a better

subject—Miss Edgeworth. I do hope you will see her—surely she will come to Twickenham, if you are not well enough to go to town—you must meet. I have just been reading again her Comic Dramas, her only failure, but, though a failure in a dramatic point of view, as true to character and nature even as her novels. I speak, of course, of the first and third, the second has very little merit, and is not like Miss Edgeworth. I hope she is writing something else. Shall I tell you of the books I have been reading? 1. Dr. Clarke's new volume of travels. He is more delightful than ever, is that Dr. Clarke. Pray, did you think that Sweden was a finer country than Switzerland? and that the Laplanders were an amiable race? We are all dying to go to this country of cloudberries, and mountains, and lakes, and good roads. Will you and Mr. Hofland make a party there? No rain—no night—no robbers—no jolts—are not these temptations? There is a description of climbing the face of a precipice, which seems to me much finer than the celebrated scene in the "Antiquary." I suppose truth is the magic; we know that this is real. 2. "Women; or, Pour et Contre,"* a detestable book—a mere hotch potch of "Glenarvon" and "Corinne," mixed up with that indescribable nonsense which most Irishmen and Irishwomen call eloquence, and which is as like it as rouge is to the bloom of fifteen. 3. "Altheim and his Wife,"† a cockney tale; not interesting, not lively, not profound, but tasty, as young ladies say of a new bonnet —tasty as tasty can be, and if not Leigh Hunt's, ex-

* By Maturin.

† I think, by Ollier, the author of "Inesilla."—C.

ceedingly Leigh Hunt-ish. 4. "Undine," a little tale from the German. Did you ever dream in some fair summer morning that you were lying among dewy rose leaves, and fanned with cool airs, and sprinkled with bright fountains, till you woke with the very feeling of all this sweetness and freshness? If you would have such a dream realized read "Undine." The character is worthy of Fletcher himself. 5. Dr. King's "Anecdotes of his own Times," very curious and entertaining indeed. The account of the young Pretender is admirable,—such as would have cured any Jacobite in the world except the author. There are no Jacobites nowadays, but still I like bad (that is to say true) characters of kings, whether *de facto* or *de jure*. They are excellent antidotes; moreover said Dr. King saith that a certain poet, commonly called Mr. Pope, killed himself with dram-drinking. 6. Horace Walpole's "Letters to Mr. Cole," another volume of these delightful letters—the most delightful that ever were written, more playful than Cowper, more sparkling than Gray, more graceful and easy than anybody French or English, male or female. N. B. I myself have a correspondent (Sir W. E.) into whom the epistolary soul of Horace Walpole has certainly transmigrated; an elderly gentleman, like himself, and of the old court, and as full of pleasantry and good humour. I threaten him to print his letters, leaving out names and altering dates, and take in the whole reading public—Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviewers included. I am sure they would pass for Horace Walpole's in any court of criticism in Europe, and if gooseberry wine be as good as champagne, I don't

see any crime in calling it so. 7. "Human Life," Mr. Rogers's new poem, elegant, polished, refined, and triple refined, must be admired by everybody, but by me with that sort of calm, sober, chastened admiration which one is in the habit of bestowing on those sort of poems which are very short and seem very long. 8. "Tom Cribb's Memorial to Congress." The battle of this is the very best thing Moore ever wrote, all the rest is caviare; but this is worth anything to those who understand it. I have some fears of your want of learning, my good friend. I have a notion you know very little of "the fancy." Now this language is not my mother tongue, but my father tongue. I read papa every set-to that is mentioned in the paper, and as far as knowledge of "the fancy" goes, setting wit and the other sort of fancy out of the question, could really have written the memorial myself. 9. "Whistlecraft's Specimen of a National Poem." This is a successful attempt to naturalize the elegant burlesque, the triple rhymes, and ottava rima stanza of the Italians, and a very pleasant trifle it is—almost as pleasant as those Italian poems themselves. One should call such works as these and "Beppo" *fun*, if the word were good enough, but really they are too entertaining to be called anything else. 10. "Holcroft's Memoirs," finished by Hazlitt. This is a most interesting and amusing book, to me who confess myself a little bitten by that which used twenty years ago to be called the modern philosophy, peculiarly so; but the author of "Anna St. Ives" was no common man, be his principles right or wrong; and the gradual rise of such a mind from the lowest possible condition

to the honour of a trial for high treason, must be attractive, independently of the many curious anecdotes with which it abounds, and the racy style in which it is written. 11. Miss Aikin's "Memoirs of the Court of Queen Elizabeth," as cold and pedantic as that royal coquette herself. 12. "Lives of Haydn and Mozart," very particularly French. That is enough, is it not? 13. Cary's "Dante," better than Boyd's certainly, that is not saying much for it; not good in the great passages, not rising like the old Florentine in the Francesca and Ugolino stories, and the meeting with Beatrice, which I think, under submission, the finest thing in the poem; but tolerably true to the general effect, concise, simple, and almost sublime. I have just been looking into it, and really, if between admirers and translators, Miss B——, Miss J——, M de Gourbillon, and Mr. D——, I were not sick of Dante's very name, I do think I would read it through, which is much more than can be said of most translations. Mr. D——'s are, as you say, most beautiful. I have not seen either translations or translator, or his dear and beautiful wife for an age. I don't much think they will go this summer. I have thought a thousand times of the fate of that poor young man, and how we should fear for them. By the way, we have already some very dear friends in Italy, a man who is quite equal if not superior to Mr. D——, and a wife who would be a great loss, though not like the lady of Farley Hill. Who is? What you say of Miss J—— delights me, it is just her true picture; if you see her give my kindest love to her and tell her to write, and do you write too, my dear friend, when you are able to relieve

the alarm your account of yourself has occasioned to mama and me. Have you tried leeches for your eyes? I can't say a word about coming to you till I know when our friend comes here.

* * * *

Forgive me if I have tried you by this long flippant letter, but I thought perhaps it might amuse you, and trusted to your discretion not to read it if it were likely to disagree with your eyes; besides I have myself such pleasure in chatting to you, such confidence in your kindness, that I could not stop.

I should be very glad, my dear Mrs. Hofland, if I could answer in the way that would be pleasantest to both of your very kind invitations; but the time when I may have the pleasure of seeing you seems at present as distant as ever. About a month ago papa formed an engagement for me to pass some days with the family of a friend, who were then in town on their way to Paris—an engagement which would certainly have terminated at Twickenham. I was not, however, able to keep it, from a severe cold and inflammation on the chest, which alarmed mama exceedingly. My illness is now quite gone; but the extreme uncertainty of our situation here (our opponent having entered into something like a negociation), the unexpected, and sudden, and short journeys which papa takes at an hour's warning to London, and above all the overwhelming quantity of engagements in different parts of the country which my

father has made and will not keep without me, all prevent the possibility of my fixing any time for the journey I should like best; so that, upon the whole, you must not expect me. If I can come I will, and will give you due notice; and if your house should be full I will sleep the whole time at Mrs. J——'s and come and see you till you are tired. Now you must not be angry at this put-off, my dear and kind friend. You are a reasonable woman, and know that papas must be minded, that brats must be christened (that's the engagement that interferes the most with my wish to come to see you), and that lawsuits must be looked after—all this you know and will allow. Your charming neighbour, Miss J——, is not a reasonable woman. I tell her these things, and she scolds. Give my love to her, nevertheless, when you see her, and tell her I will write when I have gotten a somewhat longer letter than that of this morning. Only think of her cunningness! She stretches out her hand-writing till she makes two words fill a line, and five lines fill a page—leaves half of them blank —and then calls this curious piece of penmanship a letter, and expects to be paid in current coin. She's a pretty fellow!

Tell my dear Mr. Hofland that Sir William Elford, who has been here for two or three days, says his landscapes were the finest in the Exhibition. His "Ullswater," indeed, he preferred to any picture there, except that extraordinary work of an artist whom nobody had ever heard of—"The Post Office." Sir William's own landscape is destined for one of the apartments of Carlton House.—Stare!—Whilst he was here Mrs. D—— came and stayed. He was

very much amused with her, and very much pleased. She talked, as she always does, a great deal about you. Every day with her heroines becomes more and more valuable as the Italian journey approaches. I don't yet know when it will take place, but I am afraid this summer. Oh, how much I shall miss her! She has brought me twice this year wild lilies of the valley from that lovely copse which you remember. I had no notion of their exquisite size and beauty—twice as large as the cultivated flower, and infinitely more fragrant. I am now writing in the midst of their perfume. Indeed, the flowers this year come out in such a flush of bloominess that one cannot be satisfied with looking at them. The lilacs and horse-chestnuts are now succeeded by such laburnums, such syringas, such honeysuckles, such garlands of May, pink and white, that even the roses will hardly make amends for their departure; but everything this year comes and goes as by magic.

Do you know, my dear Mrs. Hofland, you—ay, you yourself—are at present, in this house, not the cause but the excuse of a great mischief. Lucy is going to be married, and says you advised her to this rash act. Did you? *Le futur* is a lad of one-and-twenty, eight years at least younger than she is, a schoolmaster—wretched and helpless trade—who has taken a house on speculation, and will, I suppose, retire to the workhouse before winter; and the silly girl is really going to marry him. Is not this deplorable? Of course what she says of your advice is mere nonsense; it was nothing but a mere pleasantry, and is only followed because it suits her own fancy. She

has had plenty of counter advice; but I'm afraid all is settled.

I cannot think what has come to me to-day, that I cannot write without blunders, omissions, and repetitions that would disgrace a child of six years old. Certainly I have not been writing much lately; for during the whole time that I was ill I could not talk, I did nothing but read. Oh the books I got through! bad, good, and indifferent! the hundreds! The most amusing, I think, is a "Ten Years' Residence in Tripoli," by a lady. Rose's "Letters from the North of Italy," too, are good, but coarse, and Campbell's "Specimens of the English Poets" good but finical—something like the man himself—leaning against every post of a critic that he can find, and never daring to admire without a permit from some Lord, some Doctor, or some Quarterly Review. This won't do nowadays. Oh! but the oddest book I have met with is Madame de Genlis's new novel, "Les Parvenus," an imitation of "Gil Blas." Only think of her imitating "Gil Blas!" While she sticks to that she is very good; her comic powers are really exceedingly respectable—but she flies off at a tangent to her old beaten path of sentimental vice and fanatical piety, and sends her heroine to the Holy Land as a pilgrim in the nineteenth century, and then fixes her in a Spanish convent. Have you seen Miss Edgeworth yet? Is she going to publish? Say yes to both. Do not be surprised if you see Mrs. D—— some fine morning. She is going to town for a few days, and said if she possibly could manage to call she would. I hope Mr. Hofland has entirely got rid of that sad fever which has tormented him

so much this spring, and that you, too, are quite recovered. Tell me that you are, and that the Duke behaves better, and that Tom is well. Nothing can give me more pleasure than to hear all that is good of you both; in which truth both papa and mama join.

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Can you give me any news of Haydon? I have heard none for an age. Are his eyes better? Is he painting? Are any of Mr. Hofland's pictures sold this year? William Havell comes home this month.

Your long and charming letter, my dear Mrs. Hofland, would have given me nothing but pleasure, had it not been for the drawback of Mr. Hofland's continued ill-health. May he recover! and may he go to Italy! Quite well to-morrow—over the Alps next month—these are my very earnest wishes. Oh! it would be the sin of sins to keep our Claude from the country of that other Claude, whose only advantage over him was the clearer atmosphere and the finer associations amongst which he dwelt. He must go, there's an end on't, as Mrs. Piozzi used to say. Tell him, with my love, that I say so.

I am left by myself, you must know, my dear Mrs. Hofland—"All alone by myself, and nobody with me." Papa and mama are gone into Hampshire, and I staid at home to keep house and see to the haymaking, which goes on very prosperously. I am, though I say it that should not say it, a haymaker of the first water. I go about all day long;

I abjure all cautious policy. None of your safe-siders I. I bid them cut away and carry away. I give them plenty of beer; and I am so lucky in point of sun, that all the farmers of the parish look to me as a weather-glass. In the mean time I tan from red to crimson—a damask rose is pale to me, a peony delicate at my side. This, however, I do not at all care for. I love to sit out of doors all day. To sit on a haycock under a filbert-tree, in the midst of sweet acacias and sweeter firs, with a pleasant book in one's hand and Mossy at one's feet, is just about as pleasant a thing as there is in the world; and this I do to my heart's content. I have been reading quantities of books. Captain Ross's "Polar Expedition"—the catchpenny thing! He a discoverer, forsooth! All that he did was to go about christening rocks, capes, bays, and mountains after all the great men, dead and living, whom he thought to gain by, and then to come home and write a huge quarto about nothing. Shaw's fine old Travels—no bookmaking there! Mrs. Schimmelpenninck's "Tour to Alet," &c. If you like those Catholic Methodists, the Jansenists, you would like that book, I think. The two "Peter Bells," Wordsworth's and the real "Simon Pure"*—one a beautiful ballad in his way, the other a very clever parody—and divers other books, light and heavy. At present my haycock companion is an old novel called "The Beggar Girl."† Did you ever read it? It is nothing grand to talk about; and indeed people seem to think it so ignominious, that I

* By J. H. Reynolds, author of "Safie"—the brother-in-law of Hood, whom he assisted in his "Whims and Oddities."—C.

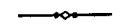
† By Mrs. Bennet—praised by Coleridge.—C.

never met with anybody in my life but Miss J—— who confessed to have read it; but to me the novel is one of the very best I ever met with. The prodigious quantity of invention, the identity of the characters, particularly a certain Mrs. Feversham and Betty Brown, and above all, the total absence of moral maxims of the do-me-good air which one expects to find in Miss Edgeworth, give a freshness and truth to "The Beggar Girl" which I never found in any fiction except that of Miss Austen. "Vicissitudes," and "Ellen," are almost equally good. You, my dear Mrs. Hofland, are one of those who can afford to praise a thing not commonly praised, and I think you would like them. I long for your tale. You are the mistress of our tears, as Miss Austen is of our smiles, and I think you have the advantage. People are prouder of crying than of laughing; you hear more praises of Lear than of the "School for Scandal." Mr. Hunter will certainly buy it. Mr. Edgeworth's Life will be curious, I should think. I wonder how he settles the affair of the four wives. No one could expect that that large family should hold together when the common father, who had so long been a bond of union, was withdrawn:

What you say of Sir William Elford's picture gives me great pleasure. Did I tell you it is for a present to the Regent? Notwithstanding this piece of courtliness, Sir William is a charming man. There is a quiet sort of humour about him, half-way between playfulness and wit, that is quite delightful —much more delightful, indeed, than wit, for it excites without alarming. Papa has promised him that we shall go into Devonshire this summer; he

has likewise promised that we shall go to Paris. How he will settle this affair I cannot tell. He may perhaps satisfy his conscience by breaking both promises. We are a faithless family, as you have good cause to say. I do, however, mean to redeem my character some day or other with you and with Mr. Hofland. I should have a thousand kind messages to send you if our people were at home, and if my dear Mrs. D—— were here. She is in town, and I fear very ill—at least, the last account frightened me to death.

I have heard from Mr. Haydon, who gives a good account of himself, and says he is painting again. He is, as usual, saucy not a little towards the Academy, though he praises Allston's picture very highly. Adieu. Pray write soon. Excuse the wafer, I am afraid of over-weight, which was likewise the reason of the clipping.



I was in very great hopes, my dear Mrs. Hofland, of thanking you in person for your very kind letter; that is to say, of being at last enabled to accept *our* dear Miss J——'s affectionate invitation, and having of course the additional pleasure of seeing you and Mr. Hofland and the new picture and Tom. Now I very much fear all this happiness must be postponed to I don't know when. My dear father has had a very unpleasant attack, not quite a fit, but something, I fear, too much like one; and though now quite recovered, as well and as handsome as ever, yet too

conscious of the lurking danger not to require all possible attention and amusement. It follows, you know, that I must stay at home to coax him, and love him, and quarrel with him, and be to him at all points of falling down and keeping up what a hoop is to a schoolboy. The worst part of this complaint is, that my dear papa can hardly be more temperate,* or take more exercise than he always has done, so that little can be effected, in the way of prevention, more than a frequent loss of blood. His medical friend took from him twenty ounces at once the other day. Well, I must not trust myself on this subject if I mean to write you a readable letter. I am sure of your sympathy. Don't say much about it when you write, for mama always sees your letters, and as, luckily, she is less alarmed than might have been feared, from her weak nerves and strong affections, I avoid most carefully all that could, in any way, recall the danger to her imagination. Now for some pleasanter news,—news that set me singing and dancing the other day. Mrs. —— is in the family way. Is not this delightful? After eleven years' marriage, just as she had given up all hopes of a child, the event has taken place. You know, I believe, how peculiarly desirable a child is in that family. Mr. ——'s estate (upwards of ten thousand a year) is not only strictly entailed on any issue male or female, and failing such issue, on a booby of a half-nephew, who married his father's cook-maid, but the whole estate is in the hands of trustees under the entail, so that Mr. ——, though of course receiving the income, had not the management of a single

* A fond delusion.— C.

acre of his own property. It is to this piece of injustice in his father that we owe the advantage of his residence in this neighbourhood. Being disgusted with the fine great place of which he was little more than the nominal master in Somersetshire, he bought and built and planted at Farley Hill. Now, the trustees will lose much of their power, if not all. Mrs. —— is still with her mother, under the daily superintendence of Dr. Sims. They keep her very quiet; she sees no one, goes nowhere, and is scarcely allowed to write a letter. Of course we shall hear nothing more of the Italian journey. News the second. We have got Mr. —— again, with a great yard full of timber, as busy as a bee abounding in good orders, and, I hope, likely to settle prosperously in Reading. During his long absence, poor man, he was quite a martyr to the gout. Out of the six months, he was confined upwards of five to his bedroom, and mostly to his bed. He is now pretty well. I have not seen him yet; but papa says one of his first questions was after you and Mr. Hofland. His wife is still at her old abode. News the third. Our Mr. Elliott has been here, and this long affair, this chancery suit of eight years, was settled in eight minutes. He takes possession at Michaelmas, though we may, perhaps, stay a little longer, as he means to make many alterations, which are not to be begun till the Spring. I have not a notion where we shall go. But for the ill-luck of Mr. Elliott's having a wife, I need not move at all, since, had it not been for that misfortune, he says he would certainly have had me himself. I wish you had seen him when he made this declaration.

Imagine a little mean-looking Bond Street shopkeeper of sixty-five, with a methodist face, all bile, and wrinkles, and sadness, and a spruce wig in fine curls, shining like a horse-chestnut. I would certainly have married him, though, but for the aforesaid impediment. I would take anybody that would marry me to these walls and trees. I shall certainly break my heart when I leave them. Much obliged to you for your advice about Sir W. E. I suspect a small impediment there too. I don't think he would have me. The man is too wise; he has an outrageous fancy for my letters (no great proof of wisdom that, you'll say), and marrying a favourite correspondent would be something like killing the goose with the golden eggs. N.B. I have not said I'll marry him, remember, even if he would have me. Ask Miss J—— to read you an extract from one of his letters which I sent her, containing an account of the young Napoleon, and make up your mind, my dear friend, to my being an old maid. A good-humoured old maid is a very likeable person, is not she? Pray say yes. I am so glad you like the "Beggar Girl"—yes, she is an aristocrat to her very heart's core; but I forgive her, the more especially as the best character she ever drew is not of gentle blood.—"Ninon," in vicissitudes — did you ever read that? If not, do. It is still better than the "Beggar Girl,"—only she abuses my idol, Madame Roland. How it is possible for any one to abuse Madame Roland I cannot conceive. Have you read Crabbe's "Tales of the Hall?" Do you like Crabbe? But that is a silly question. Everybody likes Mr. Crabbe to a certain point, and only to a

certain point. He is the only poet going of whom everybody thinks alike. Those Dutch picture-poems, which say everything to the eye and nothing to the fancy, command one sort of admiration, but not the best. These tales are eminently Crabbeish, nobody else could write them — perhaps nobody else would. They are, as usual, much too long,—half would have been better than the whole,—and too exclusively about love. As usual, too, they are very humorous and very pathetic. The last tale, "Smugglers and Poachers," is a fine instance of pathos, and there is a portrait of a little maid belonging to an old lady in a country town, which, for humour, really approaches the foot-boy in Hogarth's inimitable "Frosty Morning." If I like these tales for being so like their author, I like "Mazeppa" for being unlike *his*. Nothing can be so free from the besetting sins of Lord Byron—melancholy, misanthropy, and egotism—as that fine and picturesque tale, and its still finer and more picturesque Introduction. Thank my diminishing paper for being saved from a vast deal of *ennui* at second-hand from Captain Ross by sea, Colonel Fitzclarence on shore, and Miss Aikin and Queen Elizabeth, both by land and by water. Thank the same good cause for preserving you from a good deal of sifting and bolting, in the shape of bad criticism on "Tales of my Landlord" (of which I hope you hate the first* and love the second, especially Captain Dalgetty and his horse), and Tales by Miss Plumtre, and Soldiers' Journals, and fifty other books for the very catalogue of which I have

* The first is *only* "The Bride of Lammermoor."—C.

no room. I shall certainly preserve your school cards, and will produce them if I see any chance of scholars; but you know Reading is a perfect town of such seminaries; every other house, at all the outlets of the place, is either a ladies' or a preparatory school. Best love to the dear boy, and everything that is kindest to dear Mr. H., from us all, as well as your dear self.

* * * * *

I did not write to you, my dear Mrs. Holland, first, because you owed me a letter, and I am too wise to cheat myself in a thing of so much value; secondly, because I had nothing to tell you respecting our future residence, which is just as undecided as ever. In the middle of the conveyance our opponent's solicitor, a healthy, temperate, active man, in the prime of life, dropt down in an apoplexy, which has of course greatly delayed the completion. All however is once more en train, and by the end of January I suppose will be settled, and in about six weeks after we shall probably move, but where, I know no more than you do. At present I am fixed here, keeping house for papa during mama's absence. She is at Winchester, in the Close, in one of those old reverend prebendal houses opening on the cloisters of that fine Cathedral where she spends much of her time. She is taking care of a young married friend near her confinement, during her husband's absence, which friend is, papa says (for I have never seen her), the exact likeness of "Annot Lyle"—as small, as fair, as pretty, and almost as

young. I am afraid I shall not get mama back for nearly a fortnight. In the mean time I support my character of Lady of the Key with great credit, considering, that is, I have as yet starved nobody, have only once forgotten to write to the butcher, and only twice lost the insignia of office. We are very sorry to hear so bad an account of you all. I hope by this time you are all recovered, or recovering, but this changeable weather agrees with nothing but me and a Scotch fir,—the only two things of my acquaintance that no weather kills. If I could be glad of anything that detained Mr. Hofland from the painting room, I should rejoice at his having taken to lithography, his touch will elevate and dignify that elegant invention. I shall receive most joyfully and thankfully the copies he has the goodness to intend for me, but as we shall have so many things to move, and as I really do intend to come and see you before we all die (a fact which you have some reason to doubt), I will trouble you my dear friend to keep them for me at present; this is a great sacrifice, for I long to see them, and shall certainly come the sooner to carry off my treasure. We were so sorry not to see Mr. Hofland when he was down at the sale; the day before, too, we had been there, and even passed through Reading that very day. Has Mr. H. disposed of his picture? I heard from all quarters of the excellent purchase he had made. Pray was Mr. H. ever at Marlow? I have been spending some days in that neighbourhood this autumn, and really thought and talked of him all the time. I never saw any country which was so completely and entirely a series of landscapes. We

were at Seymour Court, a mile and a half from the town, a pretty white house on the brow of a very high hill, so steep that we went up a sort of terrace to the door; in the front was a veranda of open trellis-work quite covered with grapes, whose white and purple bunches hung down above the window, and whose stems were mixed with roses, clematis, and jasmine; through this beautiful frame we looked down on the elegant and country-looking town of Marlow, which seems half garden with its church and its bridge, on hills folding one within another in the most picturesque manner in the world; and on the Thames, winding under steep precipitous banks, clothed to the very summit with beach woods in their rich October colouring. Nothing can be so fine as the Thames at Marlow—it wants only a little more inequality of height in the hills to be exceedingly like Ullswater. By the way, did you ever see a good description of the Königsee in Bavaria? Sir William Elford has just sent me a letter of Lord ——'s, who has been travelling in Germany, which letter is a real curiosity: it is in the first place exceedingly clever and entertaining, and in the second, written in a hand so diminutive, so clear and so legible, that one reads like print matter enough almost to fill an octavo volume, written on one common sheet of writing paper without crossing, and with ample space for a fine nobility seal of arms, supporters, coronet, &c. I shall give you a still higher idea of the length and excellence of this descriptive epistle (for it is all descriptive) when I tell you that I took the trouble to copy it, and that, quick scrivener as you know me to be, it employed

me six hours. When we meet you shall see it; I daresay the public will some day or other see the journal from whence it is taken. Mr. Haydon sent me the other day a most amusing account of a picture Wilkie is painting, called "Reading the Will." You will be glad to hear that Haydon's own picture is really being finished, the grand difficulty, the head of Christ, is overcome, and a room taken to exhibit it in the spring. Mr. and Mrs. —— dined here Wednesday. His printing goes on much as usual—that is to say, it stands still—he gave up his own press in despair at the trouble; and all the Reading printers have given him up for the same reason, so now he has perforce taken to printing at home again, and I suppose by this day three months the united labours of himself and his compositor will produce a proof sheet. This is no exaggeration. His illegible MS., his eternal corrections, his unsatisfiable (is there such a word?) fastidiousness, would weary the patience of Job himself—the very spirit of gain in a Reading tradesman cannot stand it; and it's no great matter, for the book in question is not my foundling—the Translations, but his rickety brat the "Cyllanius," which no mortal ever did, can, or will read while the world stands. You are very saucy about my Duke,—the story was all true, I assure you. What, do you believe a newspaper, and disbelieve me? The Duchess is an excellent little person, and looks about her new demesne, with a waiting woman, in a style of old simplicity and kindheartedness that really does one good, but all the rest of the mansion is worse even than the common run of bad great houses, —they kill two oxen and twenty sheep a week, and

the waste, riot, and drunkenness that go forward from morning to night are sufficient to demoralize any neighbourhood in the world.—What an excellent politician you are, my dear Mrs. Hofland! In other words, how completely we agree! not quite perhaps about Lord Fitzwilliam. With all my respect for his private character, I cannot forget that he succeeded the Duke of Norfolk, when his Grace was so shamefully dismissed; and I can't help looking upon this turn out as a fine piece of poetical justice. I have not read "Purity of Heart," but I don't think anything can well be too ridiculous for the real Lady Calantha, that is, Lady Caroline Lamb, who is an old acquaintance of mine, and mad as a March hare. I have been reading a vast number of respectable new books, which have no fault but that of not being memorable; they are so dull that their very names are forgotten as soon as one puts them down. Legh's "Travels in Egypt," "The Insane World," "Memoir of H. Martyn," "Leyden's Poetical Remains," "Sir R. C. Hoare's continuation of Eustace,"—these, I think, are some of them. Being quite sick of new books I have been reading old ones—Milton's Prose Works, Dr. Symmons's Life of Milton, Bolingbroke's Political Works—these are books which one does not forget, and there's the difference. The most striking modern work that I have lately seen is one that has made a great noise—"The Suppressed Lectures of Lawrence." I am to get "Ivanhoe" tomorrow. Do contrive to read "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk." I should have liked very much to see your picture of Pope, and better still to see your Frederick; but I am afraid I have no chance of moving out

yet awhile. I shan't be able to leave mama when she comes home, and before this I can't leave papa! Papa hopes to be able to send you a hare on his own account very speedily, he has been quite distressed at not having had one before, but his dogs have been so cut, that he was forced to run a borrowed dog at the Ilsley meeting.

Bertram House, Monday, Feb. 7th, 1820.

To-morrow we shall send off for you a hare, with papa's best compliments. I write to give you notice lest, in the change of coaches, this really good-sized pussy should be lost. Did you get a long letter I wrote to you a week back, through Miss J——? If you did, you will be perfectly reconciled to the scarcity of paper in our house, which obliges me to limit my love of gossiping to this poor little half-sheet. First of all, Mrs. D—— is still in *statu quo*. I saw her yesterday, driving her mother (who is a thousand times handsomer than herself, the most beautiful woman of sixty that ever lived) through the copse that we walked about last Spring. I followed her on foot; and you would have laughed to have seen how much our dear friend enjoyed my puffing and blowing, as I trotted up hill and down hill after her blood horse. It was quite a fac-simile of the Sir John Falstaff scene at Gad's Hill—only that I robbed nobody. Have you read "Anastasius?" Is not it a very wonderful book, that oriental "Gil Blas?" The most wonderful thing is, that somebody—some review—lays it to Mr. Thomas Hope's

door—he of the chairs and tables—the furniture man! That is quite impossible; so impossible that one really stares at thinking how such a report could get about. From the internal evidence, I should not hesitate for a moment to ascribe it to that prince of sinners and poets my Lord Byron. If not his, it is certainly written by some one in his character; but there are certain parts, both of prose and poetry, and of light, derisive, Voltaire-ish mockery which no one else, I think, could write. I have just been reading Mr. Spence's book; very pleasant chit-chat indeed about our old friends, Messrs. Pope and Addison, and Swift and Arbuthnot. He was a sort of small Boswell, you know—Pope being his hero. But how old-fashioned the taste and criticism of the Frenchified race of poets seems now! How old-fashioned and how untrue! And how those great wits and small versifiers glorified themselves in their littleness, and looked down from their stilts on the bards of Elizabeth's day, and thought that the world was made for them, and they for immortality! O dear! what a sad thing is human vanity, and what a vain thing to say so! When do your Tales come out?—tell me. I sent the lithographic proposals to the Institution, and to Mrs. Howell's library; but I am afraid Reading has no taste for the Arts. Our kindest regards to the dear artist, and to your dear self.

Bertram House, Feb. 18th, 1820.

Well, I do believe that Mr. Thomas Hope wrote "Anastasius." First, because it is incredible, and

incredible facts are very abundant in this world; secondly, on the authority of the "Literary Gazette;" thirdly, on that of Lady Madalina Palmer, who had it from Mr. William Spencer (the poet), who corrected the MS., and spirited up the author to the publication, I believe; but you must let me wonder. A thousand marks of admiration would but feebly express my astonishment. Don't you wonder, too? Did you ever see the "Furniture Book?". When I first met with it, it was in the shape of a grand presentation copy, all scarlet and gold, looking just like a very fine piece of furniture itself, as little made to be read as a chair or a table; and that such a man should write a finer "Gil Blas!" a prose "Childe Harold!" My dear Mrs. Hofland, "it passes!" The letter on gardening I have not read; but I don't think, if seeing an artificial garden won't convert me, that reading of one will. A great many very clever people have liked that style of gardening. Lord Bacon, in one age (by-the-by his Essay on the subject is magnificent), Mr. Evelyn in another, Mr. Pope in a third, and Mr. Stewart Rose just now. He goes beyond you all; for he likes the Italian gardens agreeably fenced in with brick walls, with a snug little hole here and there, garnished with an iron grating, through which to survey the prospect without. Now this beats the poor Duke's* wooden gates all to nothing. My dear Mrs. Hofland, you must forgive my flippancy—the light-heartedness which is my all. You provoked my sauciness; and, if you will stir the decaying embers, must expect a few sparks to fly in your face. I feel sincerely

* Duke of Marlborough's, at White-Knights.

for your transcribing misery: nothing can be so wretched! one is perpetually tempted to alter, and afraid of spoiling. O, it is miserable! It used always to put me in a fever. Thank Heaven, my *verve* has forsaken me! I could not write now if I would. Thank Heaven that yours has not deserted you! Your works give too much pleasure and too much good to be readily relinquished. I hope those new Tales are all "Sons of Genius," and "Good Grandmothers."

Reading is very gay with bell-ringing and canvassing just now, though I do not believe there will be any opposition: in fact, the Ministerialists there are canvassing for a candidate; which desirable and gullible personage they are not at all likely to procure. It is not every man who has an abstract taste for spending eight or ten thousand pounds for being beaten. In the meantime the terrible contest for Wiltshire is renewed. I shall have mercy on your important occupations, my dear friend, and release you without telling you that I have just read Madame Necker de Saussure's notice, "Sur le Caractère et les Ecrits de Madame de Staël," of which the private part is interesting, and the criticism caviare; that I am reading Wyndham's speeches, delighted by his acuteness, his wit, his variety, and his wrong-headedness; or that I am going to read "Dudley," which is written by a *protegée*, I believe, of your neighbour Miss Hawkins—Miss O'Keefe. This, in detail at least, I spare you; but I must tell you at full length, how many and how kind remembrances papa and mama beg to you and Mr. Hofland. Say everything for me to him; and kiss Tom with your sweetest kiss in my name.

Date, 1820.

. . . . . Are not the four first of these lines exquisite? They are from "The Massacre of Paris," I think, by Dryden. Do you happen to know that among Dryden's neglected plays there is some of the finest lyrical poetry in the language? I see that I am going to write literature and criticism, and all that fine nonsense, which is so very blue—such complete indigo—so I will say for the present, Good-night, my very dear friend! I shall finish to-morrow, after I have seen Mr. Hofland, and asked a million of questions about that Cupid Tom, and the sublime "Jerusalem," and my beloved "Ullswater," and your dear self, and (as Mrs. Klopstock says so prettily) "all which you concerns." Dearest madam, Good-night! I have just left Mr. Hofland in the dining-room: left his conversation to come to your letter: When have I ever anything so good to come to? anything so good! And you are going to Ullswater next month! and he is going to Italy next year! and when he has been there, who, as I asked him, will be able to distinguish his pictures from Claude's? And he has sold the Academy pictures! Dearest Mrs. H., how very, very much we are wishing for you! but I hope, when you return from the north, we shall all meet together: it is always summer with friendship, you know. How much I thank you for what you have been so good as to send me! but you have not sent the "Fête de la Rose;" and how very, very sorry I am that I should not be able to send for you the Southampton poem. I have but one copy in the world, and that copy Miss J—— has carried off with

her to Dover; but I will transcribe it against your return, or sooner, perhaps, by the aid of franks. You must write to me from your Cottage—pray do! your letters are such delight to me. I shall tease you with mine without mercy. Mr. Hofland speaks with so much affection of your Frederick, that it does one good to hear him. I think I never saw him looking better—never, indeed, so well. Mama begs me to say everything for her. Now I am going to read your dear books till the gentlemen come; I am sure I shall be delighted—I will tell you how much, in my first letter to Ullswater; for I cannot have a moment's time to-morrow, having really a thousand and one letters to write (I don't know whether I shall be able to say my prayers even) for papa to take with him to town. Dearest, dear madam, adieu! Love me, pray love me!

Three Mile Cross, near Reading,
April 11th, 1820.

Your kind and welcome letter, my dearest Mrs. Hofland, found me quite recovering from the bustle and discomposure of removal. We are three good miles from Reading. Indeed, I have so lively a sense of my escape in not being planted in the midst of that intolerable town, that much of the natural sorrow I should have felt at leaving a home so beloved was absorbed by the comforting reflection that I should still remain amongst shady lanes and quiet meadows. After all, we are not quite transplanted yet,—only "laid by the heels," as the gardeners say.

This place is a mere *pied à terre* till we can suit ourselves better; and my Reading-phobia is kept up by the dread that "suit ourselves better," means (being translated) get a house there. In the meantime, this place is a fine lesson of condensation, which, to say the truth, we all needed, mama being as diffuse and elaborate in her tidiness as I in my litter; papa unable to tell a short story; and papa's daughter, as you, my dear friend, know to your cost, equally unable to write a short letter. Yes, we shall be greatly benefited by the compression—though at present the squeeze sits upon us as uneasily as tight stays, and is almost as awkward-looking. One of my great objections to small rooms is their extreme unbecomingness to a person of my enormity. There I sit in our little parlour, like a blackbird in a goldfinch's cage—filling it; the room seems all me; nevertheless we are really getting very comfortable, and falling into our old habits with all imaginable ease. Papa has already amused himself by committing a disorderly person, the pest of the Cross, and suspending the constable for appearing before him with a bloody cockscomb. Mama has converted an old dairy into a most commodious storeroom. I have stuffed the rooms with books, and the garden with flowers, and lost my only key. Lucy has made a score of new acquaintances, and picked up a few lovers; and the great white cat, after appearing exceedingly disconsolate and out of his wits for a day or two, has given full proof of resuming his old warlike and predatory habits, by being lost all the morning in a large rat-hole, and stealing the milk for our tea this afternoon. N.B.

we were forced to go without.—Having now talked quite enough for myself, let me tell you, my dear Mrs. Hofland, how much I sympathise with the weariness of spirit which appears in your letter. I know how terribly harassing that correcting and re-writing must be, and how much you must feel the reaction of Mr. Hofland's illness and exhaustion, But all these things will clear away. The pictures will get fame and money, and the Tales money and fame; the Lithography will sell, and Mr. Hofland and Mr. H—— will be quite well again. Borrow a little of the only gift in which I can vie with you—the elastic spirit of Hope. I long to see the Moonlight City: is it as inspiring as the Jerusalem? But I know what such a subject must be in such hands. What Mr. Hofland says of Mr. Haydon's picture enchants me. I could not help transcribing it for him, having at the moment a half-written letter to him lying by me. I see that the papers speak of it with great enthusiasm (Mr. H. has had the goodness to send me some which contained critiques on his painting), though some object to the Christ—which papa, who has seen the picture, thinks the only failure; and on my reading to him your observation on the comparative smallness of the canvas, he thinks that the apparent exaggeration of the principal figure arises in some measure from the want of greater space. Of course I did not mention either his observation or yours to Mr. Haydon, who writes in great spirits, and says he will prove that those who object to his Christ are wrong. One paragraph of his letter is very interesting: he says that his old servant, who has been his model and factotum

for ten years, and witnessed and shared all his struggles, could not help crying when she heard of his success. This does equal honour to the servant and the master. It is indeed a glorious triumph—glorious to Art and to England, as well as to Haydon. I was sure you would like "Ivanhoe:" Robin Hood's ballads were my childhood's delight too; not in a pamphlet, but in Bishop Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry," out of which, and Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," I may almost be said to have learnt to read. Rebecca is divine. How do you like "The Monastery?" To me it appears a falling off. That White Spirit, though she talks nothing but verse, is a very unpoetical personage, and harmonizes as ill with the admirable tone of common life preserved in the rest of the book, as Walter Scott's witches* and soothsayers commonly do. Shakespeare—to whom the "Edinburgh Review" has, with a truly Scottish impudence, compared the great novelist—managed these matters differently; nothing can exceed the fine keeping of his supernatural dramas; the accessories in "Macbeth," "Hamlet," and "The Tempest," are of the very colour of the spiritual agents. Besides this great fault, the story is hurried; and the Elizabethan dandy, though admirably done, almost as tiresome as the real man would be himself. I am told, though it seems scarcely credible, that Longman and Co. have given ten thousand pounds for the copyright, and that there are two more novels ready for the press, so soon as this has attained a second edition. This is really a discovery of the philosopher's stone: we shall soon see Sir Walter a lord, if

* Think of "Meg Merrilies."—C.

he goes on at this rate. Sir William Elford told me, in his last letter, a curious anecdote. Two ladies of his acquaintance have been at Wilton, on a visit to Lord Pembroke's family; whilst they were there the governess desired to see the "Arcadia," and in her progress through it, discovered between two of the leaves a long lock of yellow hair, folded in an envelope in which was written, in Sir Philip Sidney's handwriting, a declaration that the lock was "The faire Queen Elizabeth's hair, given to him by her Majesty." The miraculous part of this story is, that at Wilton, amongst her own descendants, the Countess of Pembroke's "Arcadia" (for under that name I believe it was first printed) should be so completely a dead letter. I suppose it was snugly esconced between some of Sir Philip's Sapphics or Dactylics, which are, to be sure, most unreadable things; but even them people look at as they skip; and some of the "Arcadia," tiresome as the speeches are, and overwhelming as the similes, and superfine as the sentiments, is still beauty itself. There is, occasionally, a Shakesperian flow in the language which is quite enchanting. Have you read Mills's "History of the Crusades?" It is very excellent, I think, written in a truly philosophical tone. I am half in love with Saladin, the noble enemy of Cœur de Lion—two glorious warriors both, but the Saracen by far the most enlightened: if ever I write an epic poem, he shall be my hero.

I am charmed to find you have so great an acquisition to your society. Next to having no neighbour at all—which I continue to prefer, and which is luckily our case at present—having pleasant ones is

the most desirable; and if the Rev. William Harness's friend resemble William Harness, you cannot be better off. No wonder that you miss Miss J——; she is, indeed, a most lovable person: what a treat it would be to see you and her and Mr. Hofland all together! But at present, my dear friend, I cannot say yes to your most kind invitation, and I will not say no; I cannot promise, for we are still involved in great difficulties of every sort, and till I can see how matters turn out, I cannot make any engagement. My heart is with you, be assured of that; but do not let so uncertain an expectation have the slightest influence on your plans. My father and mother go to town to-morrow to try and settle matters, and will put this into the twopenny post. They will only stay two days—perhaps only one. Mama has borne the fatigue of removing exceedingly well; she and my father beg their kindest regards to you and Mr. Hofland, in which I join most sincerely. My love to dear little Tom.

Three Mile Cross, May 27th, 1820.

Your charming letter, my dear friend, has just reached me, and I cannot help beginning to answer it on the moment, to thank you whilst the impression is yet fresh, for the delightful *article* on Haydon's picture. Of all the accounts I have seen or heard—and everybody talks, and writes, and prints about it, —yours is the most gratifying. It would be so to the artist, for you have felt and expressed just what he meant to inspire. You know Mr. Haydon always

says the ladies are his best critics. I think if ever I should happen to see him again (an affair which seems doubtful), I shall not be able to help showing him your letter. Do make Miss J—— like the Christ —for she does not; that is to say, she does not like the head. I can imagine that it requires studying and getting used to, as intellectual beauty and grandeur always must. Thank you a thousand times for your eloquent description. I know the woman whose arms you dislike—the Canaanitish woman; the giantess in front of the picture, *which* (you see I could not even speak of her as a woman) always seemed to me very unpleasant. How do your dear artist's pictures sell this year? Is he going into Wales to sketch, or to settle?—not the latter, I hope and trust. Is your book out yet? Do answer these questions, which interest us so much. We are still at this cottage, which I like very much, but which Mama does not like at all. Indeed I had taken root completely till yesterday, when some neighbours of ours (pigs, madam) got into my little flower-court, and made sad havoc among my pinks and sweet-peas, and a little loosened the fibres of my affection, and at the very same moment the pump was announced to be dry, which, considering how much water we consume—I and my flowers—is a sad affair. Nevertheless, I like the place very well indeed—a thousand times better than Reading. Reading, you must know, though I was never very partial to it, is fallen considerably below zero in my good opinion. We have a clever young man there, just from Italy, who is giving very poetical lectures on the Italian poets—very delightful lectures indeed, graceful, fresh, and

glowing,—and the Reading people won't go; they won't give their halfcrowns—that, indeed, nobody expected; but they won't even give their half-hours; they won't go for nothing; so there he lectures, poor man, to me and Mrs. H——, and the bare walls. Are they not a set of ignoramuses? I lugged poor dear Mr. J—— in the other day, just to make a show, and he went to sleep: next lecture, to be sure, we shall have Mr. Milman, which will be something. Have you read his "Fall of Jerusalem?" Very fine, I think; like "Athalie," or one of Handel's oratorios. I admired it a good deal more, though, at first than I do now, because I have just been reading the same story in Josephus; and parts of the old historian—especially the mother eating her child, and the scene of the prophet, who goes about crying, "Woe! woe to Jerusalem!" are much grander than the similar passages in the poem. Are you fond of Josephus? I never read the book before. Some chapters are quite sublime; almost as fine as the Bible.

Have you seen "Mr. Edgeworth's Life?" I don't know that I was ever more amused by a book, especially by his own part of it; but his daughter's share, though less entertaining, is equally honourable both to her father and herself. What a delightful union and affection subsisted beween them; and, in spite of a little irregularity in his marriages and falling-in-loves, what a thoroughly excellent and amiable man he must have been!—The account of Mr. Day is very interesting. I had already read Keir's Life of him, and the curious account of him given by Miss Seward in her "Life of Dr. Darwin;"

but Mr. Edgeworth's is by far the most entertaining and extraordinary: some of his poems are exquisite. What a pity that he and Mr. Edgeworth don't live at Hare Hatch now, instead of the heavy personages who do inhabit there. Do you know, I think Mr. Day was very like Mr. D——. Not in awkwardness, you will say, for Mr. D—— is very elegant; nor indolence, for he is as active in body as in mind; but in the habit of making everything, great or small, an object of discussion; of talking every day, and all day long; of despising all great, fine people, and of spending a large income in a way as useful and benevolent as it is unusual, and sometimes ridiculous. In short, Mr. D—— is the strangest mixture of liberality, and something which I must almost call parsimony, of any man that ever lived. His dear and charming wife is quite well, growing very fat, and the best nurse in the world. The child is a most lovely creature, the very picture of health and good-humour. I have never yet heard her cry. Mr. D—— always sends a thousand kind messages to you: their Italian journey is of course given up; and so, I suppose, for the present at least, is Mr. Hofland's. Have you seen the "Diary of an Invalid?" —the most amusing book on Italy and France, especially Italy, that I have met with since Forsyth's, which it resembles in a certain piquant fastidiousness, and a delightful raciness of style. The author's name is Matthews. Do read it.

June 1st, 1820.

I have been keeping my letter all this time, my dear friend, in hopes that I might be able to say I would accept of your most kind and hospitable invitation. But I am afraid there is no chance of such a pleasure for me just now. Mama is not well—she has her old complaint in her head, and, though somewhat relieved by leeches, will require some time to be quite recovered. Papa is not well either. He has a sore throat; which he manages in the worst possible manner, alternately overdoing it and letting it quite alone; blistering it by gargling brandy one day, and going out in the rain and wind all the next; so that to talk of going out, even to you, seems out of the question. They really can't do without me.

Have you seen the "Sketch Book," by Geoffrey Crayon? the only American work I ever read that possessed any talent.* The author really writes like an Englishman; but he has been in England a long time, and that I suppose is the reason. I am all in love with our cottage again. The cherries are ripe—and the roses bloom—the water has come —and the pigs gone. Once more adieu, my own dear friend.

* I cannot but think that so omnivorous a reader as Miss Mitford must have read the romances of Brockden Brown, which so long preceded, and so far (I must think) exceeded Geoffrey Crayon's highly-finished and feebler miniature works. If the one owed some of his inspiration to Godwin, the latter (save in his old Dutch Legends) is but a feeble copyist of Addison and Steele, and moreover, by parentage, belonging to the Old Country. In later days Miss Mitford had good reason to give a different judgment of the fruits of American imagination.—C.

Three Mile Cross, Oct. 6th, 1820.

I don't know that it's quite good policy in me to ell you how very much I was delighted to hear rom you after so long a silence, for fear you should ry the experiment over again; neither is it altogether politic that I should write so soon to show ou how much less zest has a letter gathered before ts time than one that has been waited for and ung on the tree till it was thorough ripe—like the ast bunch of grapes before the frost. Nevertheless, I write partly because I have a frank for dear Miss J——, who will make my letter precious by giving it to you—partly because I can't help it. I want to talk to you. Yes, the letter to Mrs. More gave us very great pleasure. Every word that you speak of the Queen is admirable—true, and delicate, and womanly. I don't so well like what you say of the King; it seems to me that you fall a little into the inconsistency which I blame so much in the Queen's advocates for palliating the sin in one which you blame in the other. His libertinism is notorious, undenied, as plain as the sun at noonday. It's no use pretending not to believe it; and without entering into the disputed question of the relative guilt of the same crime in the two sexes, it is undoubtedly a scandal and a horror that the head of the State should set such an example to his court and country. The only other crow that I can find to peck with this admirable letter is its address. I don't like Mrs. Hannah—can't abide her—think her writings masculine, not in a good sense, but a bad one; she writes like a man in petticoats, or a woman in breeches. All her books have a loud

voice, and a stern frown, and a long stride with them. Moreover, she cants, and she cringes, and she is as completely the reverse of her correspondent as George the Big is of Napoleon the Great. Well, I have emptied my quiver: now I must tell you again how much we admired the extraordinary power and talent of the "Tales;" and that though we liked the Painter and Poet story best, perhaps chiefly from some circumstances of association, yet we found much to delight us in all. The little discovery and interlude at the end of the first tale are enchanting. Don't talk of Mrs. Opie—in comparison with another artist's wife. She has not half your talent. She is vulgar always, and her vulgarity is commonly of the worst sort—that of high life; her only power is that of painful pathos; in other words, she possesses the talent of making her readers uncomfortable without making amends as you do by the glowing sunset which succeeds to your showers. I have not read these "Tales," and I don't think I shall. I like Mrs. Opie, but I don't like to feel as if I wanted to cry. I had far rather laugh, or at least feel that quiet, cheerful pleasure, which the sunny and the beautiful are sure to inspire in any art. For these reasons I leave Mrs. Opie's "Tales" to who will read them, and amuse myself with "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and with thinking of Mr. Hofland's picture, which will be just such another sunshiny drama. I am so glad he is painting out of doors—for daylight and sunlight must be the very basis and foundation of his design. . . . Oh, with his taste, and his handling, and his delicate colouring, and, above all, his fine selection of objects,

what a delicious picture it will be! It will be pleasant to look at too. Those who know nothing of Art will yet be delighted to recall days of elegant gaiety. It will tell, my dear Mrs. Hofland; I am sure of it; and it will gain him a fame, not purer or higher perhaps than he has at present, but wider and louder. I quite long to see it, but I can make no promise as to coming before May or June. I don't think I shall leave home at all this winter, though mama is setting me the example. She is going to-morrow to Winchester for ten days, and leaves me to keep house. She is remarkably well, and my dear father younger and handsomer than ever. I need not tell you how kindly they desire to be remembered to you and Mr. Hofland. Mr. J—— desires the same sort of recollection, with two additions—one that he has procured a new subscriber to the Lithography, the other that Mr. Hofland has, he believes, a neckcloth of his, which upon some opportunity or other he will be glad if you return (would not you swear that this message came from an old bachelor?). The opportunity will offer, I hope, before very long, through dear Miss J——, who promises to bring a certain beautiful bonnet (of which I have heard much), and her head in it, to Wokingham before Christmas. I love her better and better. So I dare say do you. Affection cannot be at a standstill when she is the object. I don't wonder that Mr. Hofland admires Miss Emily; and if he will find somebody worthy of her he will do a good deed. I should be very sorry to see her thrown away. Moreover, as I shall certainly be an old maid myself, it is to the credit of the

sisterhood that we keep as many charming women unmarried as possible. I hope Mr. Hofland has no aversion to old maids. I mean to be a very good-humoured one, I assure you—not at all cattish. Besides Miss J—— and Miss Emily there is another pet of mine at Bellevue. Don't you all like Miss N——? Like is not the word. Are you not charmed with her delightful simplicity, her intelligence, and her warm heart? Her artlessness is to me quite enchanting, and she is so totally unconscious of her own claims from family and fortune, and yet so thoroughly the gentlewoman born and bred! I have just had a sweet letter from her, dear love. Miss J—— says she improves. I think she will be both handsome and elegant. We dined with the D——s yesterday, who are always full of inquiries after you; the little one is an exceedingly fine and beautiful child, and Mrs. D—— makes a charming mother, though rather an obstinate one. We cannot get her to wean the brat. Another of her sins is being a most outrageous Queen's woman. She is a charming sinner nevertheless. We are in hopes of seeing Mr. Haydon, who gives a good account of his health; but the failure of the subscription must have been a sad disappointment; he got, however, a good deal of money by the exhibition, and as he has two new pupils, I hope he will be able to go on comfortably according to his own moderate desires. I have been reading your charming letter to me over again. How sincerely I agree in every word you say of the Queen; I have always known what she was from the Perrys, who had it from the Lords who conducted the first enquiry—Earl Grey, &c.;

and now from mere party spirit these people are supporting her. This is a real wickedness. I had a letter from Paris to-day from Miss N——. She says, "All are delighted at the bride of the Duc de Bordeaux. I could not help being quite affected at seeing the poor infirm king brought forward in his chair, like John of Gaunt, to receive the congratulations of his people assembled under his window in the gardens of the Tuileries. I never saw the Duchesse d'Angoulême smile before." So far Miss N——. Mr. Monck, who is just returned from a long residence abroad, offered me a wager that the poor child would be in some manner murdered before this time twelvemonth. This is shocking to think of. Only think of my writing such a long letter without saying, "Have you read 'The Abbot?'" but that is an "open sesame" that I keep for strangers or the stupid, as Mr. Haydon says. All the world can speak of the Scotch novels, and they are the only things that half the world can talk of. Adieu, my dear friend.

Three Mile Cross, Feb. 7th, 1821.

I had imagined you were busy — shall I say I had hoped so? nobody can help wishing for more "Tales of the Priory," at the expense of a little trouble to the dear authoress; and having heard of you pretty constantly through Miss J——, I did not torment you with any harassing letters of inquiry, which are, at the best, but kind reproaches as to the cause of your silence. That it arose from any dimi-

nution of goodwill never once entered my head, for whether it spring of vanity, or of wisdom, or, as is most likely, of a mixture of both, I have an absolute disbelief of neglect or unkindness towards myself. I never lost a friend worth keeping in my life, and never suspected one, least of all of my dear and kind and excellent Mrs. Hofland. So write to me just when it suits you, assured that I shall always be delighted to hear, and never affronted at not hearing; certainly I like the first best, for your letters are delightful. So Miss J—— is a king's-man, is she? the sweet naughty one! and your F—— is as much enchanted with her conversation as I am? I don't wonder at his regret at missing her, and am just now in a condition to sympathise with him very sincerely, having been disappointed of a promised visit from her by her sudden return from Birmingham to relieve her sister of her anxious charge. She gives but a poor account of the dear Miss Emily, who is, I am afraid, very delicate—and her own eyes are still troublesome. By-the-way, I have been in a fright lately about my own ears—not of having them cut off for a libel, like old Prynne, but of losing the use of them; for a month I was quite deaf. It is gone away now, by care, but I promise you I was sorely frightened. Were you ever deaf? It is a most extraordinary and unpleasant sensation. I could hear tolerably well loud and articulate speech, but no mumbling, no vague or undefined sound—neither wind or fire, or water, or carriages, as they passed along the road; everything that was continuous or unmarked was lost to me, or rather drowned by the perpetual buzzing, ticking noise that was

going forward in my own head. I should think that deafness must tend much to blunt and deaden the intellectual powers. I am heartily thankful to be quit of mine.—Yes, I have read "Melmoth" all through; I never read much by Mr. Maturin before,—for "Woman" I could not bear, and, I believe, never finished, and "Bertram" was not at all to my taste; and "Montorio" and the rest I never saw. I don't think I shall want to look at "Melmoth" again in a hurry, and yet it is a most extraordinary book, full of power—terrible power—but with some most splendid painting and touches, that go quite to the heart, particularly in—I forget the name—the starving story. It is very painful too, but not, I think, on the whole so painful as "Kenilworth," which is the most complete anatomy of the bad human heart that I have ever met with. I wonder that Sir Walter Scott could think of such names and people as Raleigh, Spenser, and Shakespeare, and yet write on through such wickedness. Why, surely when such men lived they must have purified the air; the very atmosphere that Shakespeare breathed could not have nourished a Varney—no, nor a Leicester. But let people say as they will of Walter Scott's being another Shakespeare, there is this difference among a thousand others, that the poet had a strong faith in human virtue—the novelist a strong faith in human frailty. I don't know which is most right, but I would rather be wrong with Shakespeare than right with Walter Scott. After all, the character of Elizabeth is admirably done; and as the novel is pretty clear of any "White Lady" atrocities, and full of strong excitement, we

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shall hear it cried up for another "Ivanhoe." Do you remember Miss B——, whom we met at Mr. D——'s? Mrs. D—— has been matchmaking in her favour, and has actually drawn forth an offer from a well-born, well-bred, well-estated young man, the son, grandson, and great-grandson of a whole generation of Generals H——. I must tell you a calamity that befel me on this occasion: the bride-groom-elect is a soft, lady-like, fair youth, exceedingly prim, demure, and gentlemanly (you have no notion how well he would look in a mob cap); well, we were all dining there, the very day that put this match into her head. Mr. H—— had sat next me at dinner, and held his tongue in the most provoking manner possible—now you know I like talking—and when I made him talk, he talked, not nonsense, but worse—the dullest, most intolerable, common-place sense—tasteless, vapid, a hundred years behind the age, just as the first old General H—— might have talked to one of Queen Anne's maids of honour. As I was standing wearily before the drawing-room fire, indulging the ennui engendered by Mr. H——'s silence and conversation, Mrs. D—— brought Miss B—— up to me, and asked in her quick manner, "How do you like Mr. H——'s face? What does it express?" "Nothing!" said I, in my quiet and truth-telling way, little dreaming that I was giving this flattering answer before his lady-love; and how Mrs. D—— brought him to it I cannot imagine—for I avow to you he never uttered a syllable to her that whole day. Now must I apologise to Miss B—— for having disliked him so much as my beloved Mrs. Bennet did to her daughter Lizzy, in my ever

dear "Pride and Prejudice." After all, it's a very good match—he is a worthy young man, she a kind, well-meaning girl, as much too man-like as he is too womanly—so there is a good chance of their improving each other. Mrs. D—— declares she had no hand in it, and that they have been in love these two years, and I am, altogether—in spite of my misfortune aforesaid, and my sad trick of laughing at all things—very seriously glad of the affair.

Adieu, my dear friend. My father and mother join in kindest regards to Mr. Hofland and yourself. How does the Gala picture get on? I am dying to see it. Has Mr. H—— seen Mr. Haydon's exquisite "Christ" in his new picture? Adieu, once more.

April 19th, 1821.

I am delighted to have an excuse to write to you my dearest friend; I have just had an account of the gain of your lawsuit—fruitless gain! and of the most providential escape of your valuable life; and I was longing to write to congratulate, and to condole, and to tell you of our deep and perfect sympathy, both on the joy and the sorrow. With regard to the lawsuit, we are in a condition to sympathise most entirely, for we, too, had the misfortune to gain a long Chancery suit, and found the result exactly like yours. The striking event which followed is, however, a topic of permanent and thankful rejoicing. May the life which was so remarkably preserved be as long and as happy as I wish it. Good and useful I know it will be. You do not know how much we

were struck with the relation, nor with how strong an interest we listened to it. You will be sorry to learn that Mr. D—— is very unwell, he has every symptom of approaching apoplexy; but having all his life long amused himself with combating the received theories of medicine, particularly what he calls the Sangrado system (a whim which, whilst confined to speculative harangues, did no harm), he now makes a point of honour of adhering to his opinions—persists in spite of all warning, and will, I verily believe, rather die of the blood which rushes to his head than give up his system and live by the lancet. Is not this grievous in an old friend, whom one loves so well? He has no right to kill himself in this malicious sort of way, when people wish him to live—has he? His wife and the beautiful baby are quite well—at least the child is; and as to Mrs. D——'s complaints nobody ever minds them: I never heard her say she was well in my life, and never knew her really ill. I am delighted to hear that the beautiful "City by Moonlight" is sold, and I hope that "Richmond" will be everything as to fame and profit that the dear artist and his dear half can desire. I feel a strong interest in that unknown picture, and have fancied it to myself a hundred times. How does Mr. Hofland like "Christ's agony in the Garden?" I saw the figure of Christ when I was in town at Christmas, and thought it exquisite. Mr. Haydon was getting on well with his other great picture before his excursion to Glasgow; since then his plumes have been somewhat ruffled by the strange, impossible slander in the "London." I have no news to tell you of "Foscari," which is still in

the hands either of the manager or of Mr. Macready; but I already feel sure that it will be rejected, and only wait to be told so in form before I begin another. Pray can you or Mr. Hofland furnish me, from history, or fiction, or imagination, with a high, ample, magnificent plot, something middle-aged and Italian? I have no inventive powers, and a trailing feebleness, which wants the substantial prop of a fine story to prevent that creeping plant, my muse, from running along the ground, all leaves and flowers. I have made the same request to Miss J——, who has a fine inventive faculty; but do not you, either of you, decline in favour of the other, for I mean to write twenty plays, at least, before I have done, so the plot that is not used at one time will do for another. Seriously, if you should think of such a thing it would be a great charity. Were you not very much shocked at the death of John Keats? In my mind he would have been, if spared, the next name in poetry to Wordsworth.

June 8th, 1821.

I thank you over all things, my very dear Mrs. Hofland, for your admirably conceived and developed story. I remember it well, though I think there was some addition of fortune in the real fact, which gave a turn altogether different from the deeply passionate, yet most sweet and tender interest which you have given to the tale. It appears to me quite fit for tragedy, and I shall send it, in your own very words, and with the sanction of your authority, to

my Adviser-General, Mr. Talfourd, without whom I cannot stir a finger, to know if it meets his approbation. The only thing is, whether the hero will be quite the thing for Macready, my main stay, the vigorous prop that is to support my flowers and leaves; and whether the father or son shall be hero; and whether a narrated catastrophe will be permissible; and where we shall get our witness for the finely-conceived mother, who would have been quite Mrs. Siddons-ish. The only addition that I should make to the plan would be to give Seraphina a brother, noble-minded but proud, who should resent the secresy of the hero's addresses, should work upon his father to forbid them, should first suspect and accuse Foscarini (that or Foscari is, I believe, the name), and afterwards be convinced of his innocence, and hunt out the real murderer. This would make an interesting addition, I think, and might suit Charles Kemble—for these green-room considerations, little as they seem, are great to a poor tragedy writer, and Charles Kemble's assistance is valuable in a play. Young, too, will be at Covent Garden next year, and may do one of the fathers; and Miss Foote, the beautiful Miss Foote, will be a Seraphina ready made. So, you see, I am counting my chickens—casting my play already. Your tragedy came enclosed in another from Miss J——, whose inventiveness is really very great and original. I don't think it would do, but the last scene is superb—in the very spirit of tragedy. I have never met with a finer conception, but it is only a scene, a fragment. Yours is that rarer and finer thing, a play, a whole. Again and again, I thank you, my dear friend, for

giving me the aid of that which is most precious—thought and time. Oh, how glad I shall be to thank you in a preface, some fine day, after the first representation, if ever it should come to that! How happy and how proud! Mr. Hofland's observation was manifestly just. A woman who could paint history must first have renounced her sex. Mr. Thelwall's remark seems to me only one of those complimentary commonplaces by which woman is flattered out of the use of her faculties (of course, I do not allude to myself, because I know and feel my own feebleness and want of power). But why should not a woman conceive and embody the tender passions? Why should she not write such a play as "Romeo and Juliet," for instance? Did he never read "Count Basil?"* the finest, in my mind, of modern plays, always excepting the exquisite "Virginius" of Mr. Knowles. What did you think of Lord Byron's misdoings in that way? I was prodigiously disappointed. Judging from "Manfred," I had expected something fine, but this is an icicle: no spirit of dialogue, no character, and a total failure in the heroine; a failure resulting utterly from his own impurity. He can imagine the passions, but not the affections; and his way of forming a pure woman is to mould her out of snow, like the companion of Laila, in "Thalaba." Mesdames de Staël and de Genlis, those other worthies, are exactly in the same predicament whenever they try at a pure heroine. The model to follow in female character is, in my mind, Beaumont and Fletcher. There is a something half divine in Aspasia, Bellaria, and Juliana,

* By Joanna Baillie.—C.

which one almost worships. I like their women (don't tell) better than Shakespeare's, and so did Mr. John Dryden, no bad judge, in spite of his own failures. What particularly delights me in your plot is the absence of villainy; everybody can make distress that way; the point is to produce it without.

I cannot tell you, my dearest Mrs. Hofland, how much we regret what you tell us of the ill success of the exhibition. I was afraid the room was rather out of the regular beat; but I am more hopeful than you are of the ultimate result, though the immediate loss must be felt, and the immediate commissions may be trifling, yet the seed has been sown, and a vigorous harvest will spring up. I never will believe that, now that the English nobility are beginning to open their eyes to native merit—as the sale of Sir Joshua's pictures proves—that Mr. Hofland's delicious talent can remain unrewarded. I have heard of his pictures from many quarters, I assure you, and always with unalloyed admiration. And you know that to be talked of is in itself a great good. You will feel the benefit of this exhibition next year, and the year after, depend on it. Is the "Richmond" sold? On another topic in your letter I do most heartily congratulate you, the conversion of ——, the emancipation, rather, from the most dangerous of all delusions to a young and ardent spirit. Taste has preserved him, I suppose; taste, the delicate but strong defence against the foul, coarse hands of dirty Methodism. Oh, you need not fear the rebound, he has too much of his mother to abandon a religion of charity and of love.

Three Mile Cross, Dec. 8th, 1821.

I cannot resist the opportunity of slipping in a little note to you, in my frank to Miss N——, who has torn herself for a short moment from the gaieties of Paris, to take a little look at foggy England. I always love to talk to you, and especially just now that I am full of trouble and uncertainty, it is quite a consolation. My play* is at last given in to the manager, with a strong recommendation by Mr. Macready; but I am exceedingly fearful that, not only its own demerits, but the circumstances of the theatre will ensure its rejection. The secession of Charles Kemble, my Cosmo, so necessary both to the grace and the sentiment of the play, is a terrible stroke. Then the catastrophe was not thought moving enough; so now Foscari takes poison just before the good news, and dies on the stage; and I am afraid that, without the temptation of the death by joy, Young will not act the Doge; so that of the three performers for whom the piece was written there will be no one left but Macready, and great as he would undoubtedly be in Foscari, the part is not predominant or commanding enough to ensure success. No; I expect every day to hear that it is refused, from pure ill luck, without having anybody to blame—scarcely even myself; for certainly I have spared no labour, and have actually written three new catastrophes since you saw it, that Mr. Macready might please himself in the choice. Well, I will talk no more about it. I have had to-day a terrible shock, in the death of my dear and excellent friend Mr.

* "The Foscari."—C.

Perry.* Last year, just about this time, I was at his house, and shall never forget the manner in which we were both impressed with the idea that we should not meet again. His adieu, which used to be so cheerful, was so solemn, so lingering, so completely a parting benediction. Oh, I never shall forget the fatherly tenderness of that last farewell. He was rich, but still even in that lowest point of view, his death will be a tremendous loss to his charming family.

Does Mr. H. know anything of the editor of the "Chronicle," Mr. Black, the translator of "Schlegel?" Much will depend on his conduct and character. Pray, my dear Mrs. Hofland, can you give me any news of Miss J——? It is now five weeks since my last letter, and in all that time I have never had a line. Is she sick; or is she, as I rather fear, only angry? But to be angry for five weeks! silent for five weeks! I really had rather she should be a little sick than so very, very unkind. If she were angry, why not write and scold? That is the natural vent for anger. Scold famously; that is the proper way, is it not? not maintain this dignified silence, this dumb resentment. I had a great deal rather she would send me a box on the ear. Tell her so, with my best love, and conjure her to send it speedily. I could not have believed she would for five long weeks have left a friend that loved her, and whom she knew to be already suffering much from anxiety and suspense, under the additional vexation of thinking her offended. I would not have done so by her.

* Of the "Morning Chronicle."—C.

Three Mile Cross, Dec. 16th, 1821.

I wrote you a long little note the other day, enclosed in a letter to Miss N——, but as she is, I now find, from home, it is probable that you may not have gotten it, and having an opportunity of sending to town, and something to tell, I must write again. "Foscari's" fate is decided. I had yesterday a letter from Mr. Talfourd, part of which I will copy. "I have with great difficulty screwed myself up to the point of informing you that all our hopes are, for the present, cruelly blighted. 'Foscari' has been returned by Mr. Harris to Mr. Macready, with a note, of which the following is an exact copy: 'My dear Sir,—I return you the tragedy of "Foscari," and it is with regret that I am obliged to express an opinion that it would not succeed in representation. The style is admirably pure and chaste, and some of the scenes would be highly effective; yet as a whole it would be found wanting in that scale by which the public weigh our performances of the first class. Should the ingenious author at any time bestow the labour of revision and alteration on the tragedy, I should be most happy to have a reperusal of it.—Ever yours, H. HARRIS.' I am quite sickened at this result of all your labours and anxieties. The only consolation I can offer is, that Mr. Macready assures me he never knew a refusal which came so near an acceptance; for Harris has spoken to him in even higher terms of eulogy than he has written; and I have seen another letter of Harris's, about other plays, in which he puts 'Foscari' far above all others that he has rejected, and in point of style and

writing, above one of Shiel's, that is to be acted. You see, he holds open a prospect of its being reconsidered, if altered. Whether you will adopt this suggestion is for your own decision; but certainly this play has quite prepared the way for most respectful attention to any piece you may send in hereafter," &c., &c. So far my kind friend, Mr. Talfourd. I have answered him, begging his advice as to whether I should alter "Foscari" (though really I don't know what to do with it in the way of alteration), or whether he would rather advise me to begin a new tragedy, with one commanding, predominant character for Mr. Macready; or whether, abandoning tragedy, I should try a blank verse comedy, with songs, in the way in which they have got up some of Shakespeare's lately. The great objection to this is, that I am quite clear I never could get further in comedy than mere playfulness, and that perhaps of a very faint and delicate sort. I could no more conceive or embody a fine humorous character for Munden or Liston than I could fly up to the housetop. Whatever he advises I shall do. Can you, my ever kind friend, help me to a plot or a subject? Especially tragic? It should be German or Italian, I think—but that is not of much consequence—and as deep and interesting as possible. Do pray help me if you can; unless, indeed, you are wholly discouraged by the failure of "Foscari," of which it really sickens one to think. Do not deliver my message to Miss J——, nor let her see it. I have had a very kind and affectionate letter from her, accounting for her silence, which I answered instantly, and it will be quite a lovers' quarrel, in the

effect, at least. Indeed, it is quite consoling to find that she has a fault, and that frail mortals may look at her with more equal eyes. She is a most dear and excellent creature, to be sure. Did you see Mrs. C—— whilst she was at Richmond? Is she not a curiosity? Pray let me have the pleasure of hearing from you as soon as you are at leisure. How are you in this warm, unnatural weather? and how is Mr. Hofland? Is he getting on with his "London?" and have you the happiness of your son's society?

Three Mile Cross, Dec. 21st, 1821.

Your very kind and touching letter arrived here this morning. I do not mean to trouble you with this till I have an opportunity to send it, as far at least as London, on the way to Twickenham; but I cannot go to rest till I have expressed to you the deep interest which we take in the circumstances you mention, especially the illness of your son. Everybody has been ill this autumn; and young people of delicate frames have felt the strange unhealthiness of the season more than any; to that cause, and perhaps a little too much closeness of application, I hope and trust Mr. Hoole's illness may be attributed, and that a little frost, a little amusement, and, above all, your good nursing will go far to relieve him. The affair of the law-suit is indeed terrible; but surely the Insolvent Court will not permit a fraud of this nature? It is very probably only a stratagem to obtain a compromise. Alas! my dearest Mrs. Hofland, we are only too well able to sympathise with

the misery occasioned by pecuniary losses. Do not fancy for a moment that vanity or ambition, or any of the motives which govern rich authors had anything to do with my regret at the rejection of "Foscari." To be of some little use to those who are dearest to me was the only motive of my attempt; and I shall persevere; though now that the hope and spring are gone, it will be wretched work. But Mr. Talfourd, Mr. Macready, Mr. Harris, all say that there is dramatic talent: that nothing is wanted but more roughness and strength; and it is quite certain that the only cause of the rejection of "Foscari" was the impossibility of acting it with any fair prospect of success from the want of performers. Mr. Young will take none but the first character in new plays; and Mr. Macready would have been left with the whole tragedy on his shoulders, surrounded by Egerton, Chapman, Abbott, Yates, and Miss Foote! Really, when I think of such a set of actors, I almost rejoice that "Foscari" has been rejected; and Mr. Macready's unrivalled powers would have made their weakness still worse. I have not seen Lord Byron's play, but Mr. Talfourd tells me it is one long scene of unmitigated suffering, in which the Doge only is well-executed, whilst the son is utterly imbecile, and his wife a mere scold. Since I have heard that it is so bad I have a violent fancy to read it. We are all afloat in this country of rivers; surely such a winter was never seen, and it seems terribly fatal to people of sixty or thereabouts. Within a very few weeks I have had occasion to write letters of condolence to *three* of my very limited circle of correspondents, on the death of a father, or a mother! Poor Mr. P.'s

beautiful daughter, the loveliest creature that a poet could imagine, or a painter embody, is likely to lose her sight. A *gutta serena* is the disease apprehended; and this at fifteen, and with a mind as charming as her person! Grief at the death of her dear father has had much to do with her disorder. My dear mother, too, has been very unwell, though, I thank God, she is now better, but her delicacy of health keeps me in perpetual alarm. To hear better news of you all will be the greatest comfort in this desolation outward and inward.

P.S.—Mr. Talfourd says that Charles and Richard are both heroes of melodramas, which is conclusive against them. I am going to try a subject of imagination, but am doubtful of it. If you meet with anything, I know you will have the goodness to send it to me. I send this through our dear Miss J——, who has it in commission to read you my plot, and to implore and entreat your advice and assistance. God bless you.

Monday night, (about) Jan. 1822.

Did Miss J—— tell you, my dear Mrs. Hofland, that I had intended accompanying papa to town this week, and giving myself the pleasure of spending a day or two with you? And did she tell you that the illness of my dear mama would prevent my leaving her now, and that our arrangements were so uncertain that I could not fix on any other time for that happiness? Did she tell you this? and did you

grumble and scold together? or was she, as I rather suspect, gone to town before my letter arrived, and is the scolding and grumbling postponed till her return? All this, talk as gaily as I will, is a melancholy fact. I *was* coming this very week; mama has been ill, is still far from well,—I cannot possibly leave her now; and it depends on papa, on the weather, on a Chancery suit, and on fifty other things—all of them as uncertain as the wind—whether I can leave home this winter. So, my dearest Mrs. Hofland, I prepare myself for all disappointments by expecting nothing: a piece of philosophy which I call on you to admire according to its rarity. At all events, you must not expect me. If I can come, I will; and, at all events, I will not fail to give you a week's notice at least if there is any chance of your being so troubled. We will now talk of other matters. The Valpeian play cuts a very grand figure on paper; but, to tell the truth, this fine, great, learned thing was as dull as an unbraced drum. I never yawned half so much in my life. The language is beautiful, as sweet as Italian, and stronger even than sweet. It is just, as to vocal sound, what the Apollonicon is to instrumental; but even that won't do for four hours, and it lasted little less. Everything that evening* crept, drawled, "trailed its slow length along." The last time I was in that hall was at the election. O what a difference! All the difference between the false and the true, the living and the dead. O, a Greek play is nothing to an English election: the action so much more inte-

* Compare this with the note on the Reading Greek Plays in Miss Mitford's "Belford Regis."—C.

resting, the characters so much better developed and the speeches not half so long. I could not help telling Mr. Palmer, who was standing by me, that I hoped that Mr. Wayland's petition would succeed, that I might be awakened again by an election; a compliment which may remind you of Lady Coventry's expression to George the Second—her desire to see a Coronation. I am very glad you liked the Epilogue. I did not mean that Talfourd wrote as Haydon painted: the resemblance is rather in manner, in conversation, in enthusiasm, that powerful engine of genius. His eloquence is wonderful, so full, so genuine, so fresh: there is such age in his knowledge, and such youth in his fancy, you would be charmed with him, and so would Mr. Hofland. But he is not a Haydon; he wants his noble and open simplicity, that charm of charms. He is positive of Leigh Hunt's innocence; and as he is not his friend his testimony may have some weight. They know very little of each other. We had Miss. N——, too, at these Plays. I shall send you her sonnet as soon as I get it, but she has no copy at Reading, and must wait her return to Kew. I should like you to see Miss N——; she is a very splendid and magnificent wit. I have seldom met with any one so dazzling. She must be admired, that is certain, and perhaps that is all: she wants Woman's best power—the power of exciting affection; but I know no harm of her, and her talents are really surprising. I dare say you will see her. You must not mind her talking most to Mr. Hofland: she never does talk to a lady when a gentleman is by.

Three Mile Cross, June 14th, 1822.

I know not how sufficiently to thank you for your kind and charming letter. I should have answered it upon the very moment, only that at that moment I knew you were so busy; and afterwards I had the great pleasure to hear that you were gone to Cambridge. Even now I am doubtful if you be returned, and sure that you must be busy; but I cannot help writing to congratulate you from the very bottom of my heart on your son's success. All happiness and prosperity attend him! It was worth a million of common triumphs to have succeeded against such obstacles and under such difficulties of health and depression. *He must do well*—be sure of that. The force of mind which has been shown on this occasion cannot fail to carry him, in honour and goodness and happiness, through the world. You can scarcely know how I went along with your feelings as I read your letter. I wish you joy, too, of your removal, my dearest friend. I have long thought that, beautiful as your situation was, both you and Mr. Hofland were thrown away, and out of the way at Twickenham; but now, in the painter's street, and amidst the society for which you are formed, and which is of immense use in diffusing fame, and therefore profit, now I am sure you will both get on as you deserve. Oh how happy I shall be to come and see you there! There is nobody in the world with whom I should feel so thoroughly at home. Oh I must come! but I am afraid not very soon. In this week's "Museum" you will find an article of mine on the "Tales of the Manor."* I

* By Mrs. Hofland.

wish it was better done; but I am new to the trade; the extracts, however, will speak for themselves. I would have sent you my copy, only that it is not stamped, and would put you to more expense than the *eightpence*, for which it is sold at John Valpy's office, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, or you may borrow it of Miss J——, who takes it in. I have just finished an article on the same work, which is to go off to-morrow to Messrs. Whittaker, for the "New Edinburgh." I could not finish it before, because you must know, madam, that that said book is in so much request hereabouts, that Mrs. Howell was at last obliged to despatch a note to Lady Sherborne, to request her to return the work, for one day only, on a very particular occasion; on which Lady S. sent a man and horse, one day, to bring the books, and the next, to bring them back again. This is quite right, is it not? I have done my very best in this article, of course, and tried to make my real admiration as piquant, and delicate and insinuating as I could. I hope there is no doubt as to its insertion; though of course there must be a reference to the Edinburgh editor; but the bookseller (who is quite as powerful, I suspect) had no doubt about the matter. I shall try to make my way in other quarters; for I think even better of these delightful tales since I have had so much to do with them. Shall I tell you my favourites? The first—though the subject might have been hazardous—the first part of the second, which is really delicious; the Canadian story, and the last. I must tell you an anecdote of the last. Papa—who hates tragical subjects—asked me to recommend him one of your stories. I looked out

for him the Canadian tale: he was called out, laid down his volume amongst the rest on the table, and when he returned took up by mistake—"A Stricken Conscience." We saw that he was quite absorbed in his book; so absorbed that he turned his pet cat out of his lap, huffed away my pet dog, drank his tea scalding, and answered "No," for "Yes," to every question that was addressed to him; at last he had done, and I ventured to say, "How do you like it?" "God forgive you for giving me such a book to read!" "Why did you read it then?" "How could I help it? Who can help finishing that story when they have once begun it?" You are exactly right respecting my feelings as to "Foscari." Hope has, with that play, been so often rooted out and replanted, that now it will not grow. I will, however, do my duty by it; and am just going to send the new fifth act to Charles Kemble. It is the seventh! Only think of the difficulty of writing another catastrophe, with so many foregone conclusions flitting before my brain! There have been two assassinations, two deaths by joy, father and son; two poisonings, the one worse than the other. I am a sad hand at a fatal draught—and now I am about to kill my hero by fair fighting. Well, Heaven prosper him, poor fellow! and commend him to the good graces of the high court of Covent Garden. In the meantime I want to write another and a higher tragedy, with some fine and splendid character, the real hero for Macready, and some gallant-spirited youth, who may seem the hero, for Mr. Kemble. Can you think of a plot—or, rather, of some historical fact on which to ground a plot—which would contain these requi-

sites? It would be the greatest favour in the world. Richard Cœur de Lion has found a very charming poetess in Miss Porden; her Epic is really a triumph for the sex. She is a very delightful young woman. Does your artist really go abroad this autumn? I know nothing of his destined companion; but the work which he edits is very interesting indeed. Everybody is gone abroad—all the clever men. Mr. Macready is in Italy; so is Mr. Milman; the last that was heard of the last-mentioned worthy has entertained me very much. He was a perfect salamander—never hot in his life—seldom warm—an absolute sun worshipper. Well; he was met, about three weeks ago, by a gentleman of this neighbourhood half-way up a steep hill, with his hat and neckcloth on one side of him, his coat and waistcoat on the other.

Three Mile Cross, July 24th, 1822.

Having an opportunity of sending to town, I write partly to thank you for your very kind letter, but chiefly to tell you that we have had a fluctuating report, the truth of which I have not been able to ascertain, that White Knights is sold to Mrs. Coutts. If the fact were so, and you have any copies of your splendid book unsold, it might be highly advantageous; and, even if you have no copies of the work remaining, the prints, or the drawings, or anything, in short, to bring our dear and great artist into immediate connection with this rich and liberal woman. You in town will of course be able to find

out, without any difficulty, whether there are any grounds for the report. You are very good, too good, in what you say of sending your "Tales of the Manor," but do not if it makes the slightest diminution of your profit. You know what I mean. No one would more value any book of yours, or any present from you, but we are too entirely friends to render such things necessary, and I know what it is to have dealings with booksellers, who grudge every copy. We shall be delighted to see the children's books, and, indeed, any of your earlier works that you can lend us.

I only mentioned the difficulty of getting the "Tales" to show you how very much they are read and liked here. The critique for the "New Edinburgh" is much better done, I hope it will be in the next number; it was not in time for the last. Oh, no! I did not write the review of Hazlitt, whom, in spite of the whole University of Cambridge, I regard as the first prose writer of the day; so light, and brilliant, and sparkling! so original! and often so true.

I don't agree with him always, to be sure, no one can with any deep thinker, who shows to the very bottom all the nooks and corners of his mind—the byeways and short turnings;—but he is a master spirit, depend on it, and the Cambridge people know that, or they would not be so angry with him. If you had read as many of his books as I have done, you would admire him too. I have not seen his last volume of "Table Talk," for I have not now much time for reading, but I expect it to-day. I do very little for "The Museum" but poetry. There are

some dramatic scenes of mine there which I think you would like; you must make Miss J—— lend them to you. Miss Porden's "Richard" would not make any difference to me, but, on mentioning the subject to my "adviser general," he said that "Richard" was already a hero of melodrama, which is a fatal objection, and that a judicial scene was the worst possible thing in a tragedy, the heroes of which ought to be subject to no human law, but only to the terrible elements of power and of passion. I cannot help thinking this rather super-subtle (to make use of one of his own phrases), nevertheless I submitted. Yes, "Foscari" is very much better than when you saw it; much stronger; more manly. It has been in great part re-written, besides the seven fifth acts, and Cosmo now thinks "Foscari" guilty, which gives much more vigour to the trial scene. I don't think this present last act (oh, that it may be the last) quite equal to the one that preceded it, and with which Mr. Macready was so pleased; but still the manager had a right to demand an alteration, and the great attention and kindness of Mr. C. Kemble required every respect and deference from me. But I am so worn out with hopes and fears about that play that I have really ceased to think of it. What a failure "Halidon Hill" is! greater even than Lord Byron's tragical misdoings. By the way, was ever anything so extraordinary as his lordship's consigning the dead child to Mr. Murray? He is the strangest man!

Our dear friend, the member for Reading, is not Monckton, but Monck, a collateral branch of the great Duke of Albemarle's family. Enclose your

letters to him in future, my dear friend, without any "honoured" on the outside, as they come to me afterwards through the Reading post-office. Everything that you tell me of your son is delightful; you are a happy mother. Kindest regards to Mr. H. I am so glad he is got into his own place amongst the great painters. Kindest regards from all.

Wednesday, 19th June, 1823.

Your very welcome packet arrived just as I was finishing a parcel of enclosures to Mr. Monck, and I am arrived so near the end of my weight, that I can only answer by a shabby note your kind and charming letter. You know your chattering correspondent well enough to be sure that she will make it out some day or other. I was fully persuaded that my father had told you the result of the Covent Garden affair.* He got one hundred in money, and another in a draft at five months, which was discounted without difficulty, and will, I dare say, be duly honoured when the time comes. I also believed that he had arranged about the prints which you have had the great goodness to receive and take care of. I think, my dear Mrs. Hofland, that we must trespass still further on your friendship to dispose of the selected prints, if you can, to Hurst and Robinson, and to enquire either at Sotheby's or Robins's, whether it is not too late in the season to sell the others. But if not, you will, I know, have the goodness to arrange the matter for us; and, if it be too late, as I think it

* The production of "The Foscari" on the stage.

is, you will, perhaps, be so kind, as to give them house room till the next season. Do not mention the name of the owner of the prints, especially at Robins's, as it would seem strange to George Robins that my father should not have spoken to him himself. Pray forgive all this trouble. I assure you we are very sensible of your great kindness in this affair, as in all others. We have not yet heard of a curacy, but are still on the look out. I am quite surprised at the difficulty, but my father still expects to succeed. Do not think so hardly of poor Haydon; his debts are not more than 5,000*l.*, of which 1,300*l.* are, as you say, law expenses; the other part he had every reason to hope (you know how sanguine artists are!) would be cleared by the subscription for the "Entry into Jerusalem," and the exhibition, perhaps late, of the "Lazarus." I hear from him two or three times a week, and I assure you, my dear friend, his letters are full of feeling, though his indestructible buoyancy will break out. His wife has behaved like an angel. I am heartily sorry if his pupils suffer, and so I am sure is he; but I have such confidence in his principles, that I am sure the first money he gets will be devoted to reimburse them. It is, though, a sad thing that they should lose. Chatfield and Bewick* are charming young men. I do not know Mr. Harvey. I see, with great pleasure, the new society with its formidable list of names. It must succeed!

* The life and memoranda of the latter-named pupil of Mr. Haydon, just published (1871), contain fuller revelations of this transaction, the discreditable nature of which escaped the letter-writer; being glossed over by her partiality for the man's brilliancy. A later paragraph, it will be seen, refers to Haydon's portrait of Miss Mitford.—C.

What is to be the subject of Sir John Leicester's new picture? As to Blenheim, it ended as I feared; no hopes from that quarter. I have not had a glimpse of myself yet. Is it in the published number? Very odd that George Whittaker did not send me a copy! I suppose he thought I should not like the oversize—and, certainly, there was no need to make me larger. I was to have had some numbers of the engraving, too, of which I should certainly have sent you one; I shall write and send to Mr. Heath next week. I wish the review had been better. I did attempt to analyze the story, but I found that I made it poor and bald, for want of habit in doing these things, and so thought it better to leave it as you saw. It is astonishing how difficult it is to find extracts from very delightful books that shall bear out the praise they deserve as a whole. It all depends on brilliancy of style. Hazlitt is the man for that. I quite agree in every word you say of the "Liber Amoris." He is in love for the first time in his life, to desperation and folly; but it is fine passion, and therefore affecting.* Mrs. Haydon says he used to make her cry, but that he has the simplicity of a child. They did all they could to prevent his publishing, but it was in vain. I have heard from Miss J——; they are are all better. I think I have contrived, at the expense of your eyes, to put a long letter into small compass. Kind

* To many readers of the present day, the "Sally Walker" book, by which familiar name the "Liber Amoris" is best recollected, seems to be little better than an *imitation* of Rousseau's "Confessions"—rhapsodical, and not containing within itself those evidences of sincerity, which alone can justify the "fine passion" of a poet, for one of a cold, commonplace, inferior nature.—C.

regards to Mr. H. and yourself from all here, and my best respects to all who are so good as to remember me.

Three Mile Cross,
1824.

How very long it is since I have heard of or from you! My father being going to town, although, perhaps, only for a day, since his stay depends altogether on circumstances, I cannot help writing to ask how you all are. You will see that "Foscari" is reproduced, and I am sure that Mr. Hofland will do all that he can amongst the gentlemen of the press in its favour; and I know how powerful his word is. Of course if I have the power of giving orders now, of which I am doubtful, and if the piece is repeated, as I hope it will be, my father will not fail to forward to you what may give you pleasure, as a means of seeing "Peter Wilkins,"* of whose splendour I hear much. I was very sorry not to be able to send you a copy of my "Dramatic Scenes." But, having sold the work, my power in that way is, of course, limited, and poor authors have so many necessary claims on such attentions, that one's friends are necessarily neglected. I am quite sure that you will not attribute the failure to any want of attachment.

If you want to know what I am about, it is "Inez de Castro," a tragedy; and a thousand and one articles for annuals, of which a new one seems to

* A spectacle then running at one of the theatres.

start every week for my torment. If you don't get orders, take it for granted that I have not the power to give them; for I am sure my father would not forget you. God bless you.

Monday, May 25th, 1825.

I have been waiting an opportunity to write to you, and thank you most sincerely and heartily for your very kind and very welcome letter; and now that the opportunity has arrived, it is passing so quickly that I must write at full speed to overtake it. I think that a vain woman could not hit upon a better plan than to procure an unflattered likeness of herself to be hung in an exhibition room, for it sets everybody on saying pretty things, and gives a finer gratification than vanity can give in proving that her friends are so good as to give her a far pleasanter place in their recollection than she actually deserves. It is very delightful to be thought of partially, even although it may lead to some mistake. As for the picture, I shall always value it most exceedingly as a high honour, and a great kindness, from such a man. How brutally his * portraits have been attacked in the "John Bull," and what an escape I have had in not being included amongst them! However, he has another historical commission, and will, undoubtedly, go on well. Be sure to tell me everything about Mr. Hofland's landscapes; everybody says that he never was in such flower as this year. Tell me what he is doing, and going to

* Haydon's.

do, and what you are doing and going to do; and how Frederick (I never shall learn to call him Mr. Hoole) goes on in health and prospects. I am finishing a tragedy on the subject of Charles and Cromwell, for Covent Garden next year, and then I shall go dingdong to a novel, of which I have already laid the plan. It will be common English life in the country, as playful, and as true, as I can make it, in other words, as like Miss Austen; but I am unfeignedly afraid of the attempt. It must be made though; and when I recollect the kind encouragement which I have so often received from you and Mr. Hofland, and the universal demand made on me for such a work, I feel emboldened. Have you read "Tales, by the O'Hara Family?" The third volume, only the third, for the others are very inferior, seems to me exceedingly fine and powerful, although rather melodramatic. There is such a quantity of talent floating about now, that one wonders at anything succeeding. Can you tell me who wrote these O'Hara Tales? You who hear everything. In spite of my love of the country, and of my little garden, I do sometimes envy that delightful sunning water of London society, where you have all the drops bright and sparkling from the spring head. The stream gets muddy before it reaches us. Mrs. D—— is in that brilliant place just now. I hope that she will call and see you, and show you her little girl, who is really the most wonderful wonder of five years old that ever thought and talked, for those are her accomplishments. Her precociousness is entirely unforced. Indeed, I do not think it would be possible to hold her back even

if her father and mother wished to do so, which I can hardly suppose they do.

Have you seen Mrs. C—— this year? I find that Miss J—— is too busy to be with her in town, which must be a great drawback on Mrs. C——'s comfort. Miss J—— and Emily have now twelve pupils, and are so engrossed that I scarcely ever hear from them. But the cause is so gratifying that no real friend can lament the effect, even the vacations are bespoken for a long time to come.

Is "Moderation" out yet? I augur much from the title. It seems to me likely to be a tale in your very best way; there is undoubtedly no one who can combine so much instruction with so much heart and feeling. I exceedingly wish to see it.

Reading is undergoing the process of canvassing just at present, and has indeed candidates enough for three towns. First, the two old members, who are Whigs; next, two new candidates who join forces, and are Tories; another Tory candidate, who happens to be sheriff of the county this year, and, therefore, can't canvass formally; but puts forth handbills, in hopes the dissolution may be postponed, begging his friends to wait, and so forth. A fourth Tory talked of, and a Radical coming. I think that in this multitude of enemies the old members will find safety. Mr. Monck at all events is quite secure.

God bless you, my very dear friend. I am quite ashamed of this hasty, shabby scrawl. But I know your great kindness and indulgence, and have no time to rewrite it.

Three Mile Cross, Sept. 20, 1826.

"We did certainly send that worthless hare, not as a messenger of reproach, but of inquiry, for knowing your over-appreciation of any poor attention I hoped that it would bring some tidings of you, in which it succeeded most completely. I am delighted with all that you tell me, especially the holidays at St. Leonards, and the sale of the pictures—a great thing as times go, and I earnestly hope that next year will go better still; that Mr. Hofland will sell as many pictures on better terms than "Patience" and "Integrity;" that Mr. Hoole will have twice the pay, and only half the duty (the pleasant progress of his profession); and that your head and fingers will have ten weeks of rest instead of five. The best wish of all for me would be that these holidays might be somewhere where we could be together; for I should dearly like to see you, and hear all your thoughts, and stories, and news, and tell my no thoughts, no stories, no news in return. But that is too good to hope for, so I must tell you all I can on paper. In the first place, my book is *not* out, nor have I the least notion when it will be. A grievous disappointment, because the payment of the money depends on the time of publication, and we had every reason to expect that it would have been produced in May, and reckoned on it accordingly. George Whittaker imputes the holding it back to the state of the trade, and, perhaps, with truth; but it is very worrying, especially as I have reason to believe that I could have got more money, and money down, elsewhere. Nevertheless, I think we did right to let him have it, and we must hope for the best; but it's a sad trial.

Then Mr. Thelwall's magazine has stopped, and he has not paid me a farthing. He says, indeed, that he has no doubt but that Mr. Friend (their treasurer), when he recovers, will pay me; but that he has advanced 700*l.* for the concern, and cannot lose more. Now I have nothing at all to do with his losses. He applied to me, and I shall always consider him as bound in honour to pay me. Don't you? You know the fuss he made to get me; and of all the editors I ever wrote for, he was the most fidgetty and troublesome; found fault, sent back my articles (a thing which never happened to me in my life before), and worried me to death. Moreover, he kept an article of mine to which I was writing a continuation, so long, that as it was about wheat-hoeing, and was dated, I shall be forced to keep that, and the subsequent one, till next year, before they can be inserted in Mr. Baylis's magazine, because one can't expect to put in a paper dated May, in October, or one dated June, in November; and altogether Mr. Thelwall has worried me more than anybody I ever had to do with before. I don't want any fuss made about it, because there's no good comes of making enemies, and because Mr. Friend may pay me; but if he does not in the course of a month or two, I shall certainly apply again to Mr. Thelwall, considering him as personally bound, so far as honour and honesty go, to remunerate my labours, which were undertaken for him at his request, and on his responsibility; and I am quite sure that you, who were the channel of his request, will think the same. I am very sorry for the ill success of his speculation; but I can't help it. I am sure my papers

were not the cause of his failure, and those which he rejected were put into the "Monthly" instantly, and paid for at the rate of ten guineas a sheet, with thanks. Indeed, both Mr. Baylis and Mr. Blackwood actually dun me for contributions. Now, don't you think I have claim on Mr. Thelwall? The money is between seven and eight pounds—nothing in his 700*l.*, but a great deal to me, especially as we are disappointed in the coming out of "Our Village;" and all that I earn comes in in small sums.

My two tragedies, the "Charles" and the "Rienzi," are gone with Mr. Macready to America. He proposed, through a mutual friend (Mrs. Trollope), to take the "Rienzi" (the "Charles" he had not seen), promising to do all he could for it, and engaging not to bring it out unless in a way satisfactory to the author. I was very much puzzled what to say; but at last accepted his offer, provided he would also take the "Charles," to which he acceded, and they are gone. Heaven knows what will be the result! We never met nor wrote to each other—all having passed through the intervention of Mrs. Trollope and Miss S——. The "Rienzi" could certainly have been produced at Covent Garden this year. Indeed I know that they would have done it; but then it is not in Mr. Young's style, and altogether I think that I have done for the best. At all events, as old Froissart says so often (*vide* Lord Berners' translation): "It is done, and I cannot amend it." Be so good as not to mention this, except to Mr. Hoole; for I am very desirous, uncertain as the result is, that the fact of the plays being gone to America,

should not get into magazines or newspapers, and you know that whatever is talked of in London, does always get into those journals. Adieu, my dear friend, and write to me as soon and as long as you can.

William Howell is returned from India; an elegant man, but much out of health. He has brought quantities of sketches, and is about to publish a splendid work.

Three Mile Cross,
Friday, March 13th, 1829.

Even at the certainty of not getting a frank, I must write to you, to put an end to this extraordinary mistake. It is perfectly true that my cousin Bertram Mitford, the head of the house, is married to another cousin of his and mine, Miss Frances Mitford, grand-daughter of Colonel Mitford, who wrote the "History of Greece,"—and grand niece to Lord Redesdale. It was a long engagement; everybody began to think it would never take place. He is a very pleasant Northumberland squire, not the least literary—the bride I have never seen, but she is well spoken of by everybody, and I have no doubt it will be a most happy and suitable marriage. The delay was not occasioned by fickleness, but by a bad leg of the lover, owing to a fall in hunting. So much for that story. As to Mr. Monck, nothing under the sun would divert him so much as to humour a mistake of the kind, he being a noted

wag, whom no one in these parts would for a moment think of believing on such a subject. In real truth, my dear friend, it is most certain that I never shall marry; at my age it would be most foolish, even if any one were simple enough to desire so old and ugly a wife—no! tell your dear F——, that I am resolved to justify his good opinion. At present I have had my hands quite full without any such folly. During part of the winter I was myself very poorly—so unwell, that I could neither write nor go out; and since that time my mother has been exceedingly ill, as indeed she still continues, and engrosses me in a manner most painful and melancholy. She does not keep her room, but sits all day in our little parlour, a distressing spectacle of sickness and old age. So entirely have I been engaged, that I have been forced to give up the attempt of finishing the tragedy that I have in hand until next season, although Mr. Price and Mr. Young really dun me for it, in a manner you would hardly think possible. I have also been obliged to decline many offers for periodical works—to put aside for the present, a very large offer for a novel (not from Longman's—by the way, did they ever say anything to you about their refusing "Rienzi?") and now that I must work for my old friends and employers, you cannot think how much I fear that what I do will be good for nothing; so heavily does the melancholy and dreariness of my life press upon me. My father, too, has had the rheumatism—one horse is lame, and one of my dearest friends in this neighbourhood is dying; so that nothing on earth can be less like the gay bride that I have been

thought, than the seclusion and sameness in which I pass my days. It is true that my friends are most kind in calling, and that if ever I do go out I am received with extraordinary attention; but *that* is so seldom brought to bear that it might cure any one of vanity, to see how dismally my hours pass on. You will not, I am sure, think that this is the language of complaint; for independent of the necessity of fulfilling, as well as so fallible and weak a creature as I am can fulfil, an imperative duty, it is better to be and to feel solitary, and melancholy, and poor, and over-burthened, than to have one's head turned, and one's mind deteriorated by that most foolish of all follies—literary conceit. I am rejoiced to hear that you are all well. Make my most affectionate regards to Mr. Hofland and F——. Who is young T——? I do not disclaim the cousinship, for I have so few relations that I quite hail a kinsman; but I do not at this moment know whom you mean.

It is a very pretty attention in Mr. Ackermann: I shall write to him, and thank him to-morrow, and also to the Halls. My mother's complaint is a tremendous cough, and asthmatic attack; we hope there is no danger, but it lasts a long time, and wears her greatly; my chief hope for her is in mild weather, if it would come. How very unkind and negligent you must have thought me. How undeserving of your long and tried friendship! I hope if such had been the case, I should have behaved better. Once again God bless you, my very dear friend.

Three Mile Cross, Sept. 24th, 1829.

A thousand thanks, my dear friend, for your kind letter: I think that one of my notes must have been lost, for certainly I wrote last. However, we are too old, and, I trust, too dear friends to stand on that kind of ceremony; only that I always love to hear from you often, having more fear of your health, and Mr. Hofland's, and Mr. Hoole's, and poor Tom's, than of any other four particular friends. On the whole the present bulletin is very favourable, and I earnestly hope that this autumnal summer, which seems to have set in, will do good to you all. Poor dear Tom must be a sad anxiety; but when taken in time, with good advice, and good nursing, those things are often got over, and so I trust it will prove with him.

Your account of Mr. Rothwell* is very interesting, he seems so deserving of his good fortune. The name is not common, and it is that of some relations of my mother, who lived at or near Salisbury. Ask him if he had any connections who lived there a long time ago, and were related to the Russells. I should very much like to call him cousin.

I am completely and entirely of F——'s mind about marriages; they are the most foolish things under the sun. I saw a dear friend of mine lately "exchange her maiden gladness for a home and for a ring," and really I would as soon have followed her funeral—a sweet woman, with everything to make her happy, a good fortune, affectionate relations, troops of friends, and more admiration than she knew what

* The portrait painter whose outset was so extraordinarily brilliant, as to have entitled him, in the opinion of many, to be the successor of Sir Thomas Lawrence.—C.

to do with, marrying one of the most disagreeable men in the world, apparently from no other motive than to be called Mrs. instead of Miss. It is lucky that everybody does cry at weddings, for I am sure I could not have helped it. There is to me no sight so melancholy; and where there is no money the thing is worse still.

I have not seen your "Beatrice" yet, although I have asked for it constantly. Is it out yet? Longman's people advertise so little that one is forced to ask the question. I shall be very anxious for its success. I am sure that it ought to succeed. My play* is not yet finished. I have been waiting for the "Ban of the Empire," which, after ransacking an immense number of libraries, and writing to half the historians and law professors of Heidelberg and Göttingen, has at last been sent to me by a Westminster School boy, who learnt German on purpose to search for it. Is not this as great a compliment as a writer can well receive? The boy never saw me; but heard that I wanted the document, and set his whole heart on obtaining it for me. We shall hear of that youth in literature himself by-and-by. I do not now suppose that my tragedy will be out much before Christmas. At least I hope that Mr. Price and Mr. Young will not worry me for it sooner. We are all at present pretty well. Adieu, my dear friend. Love from all to all.

* "Otto."—C.

Monday, November 23rd, 1829.

I should have written, even if I had not received your very kind letter, to tell you how much I am delighted with "Beatrice." It seems to me the very best thing that you have ever written; interesting, striking, and true. My mother, who generally now falls asleep over new books, was so interested with this, that she hardly let it out of her hand till she had finished it. I thought so much of the work, that I never found out that it was badly got up, and I really think that it must do you good in every way. I am sure it ought. The conclusion is rather spun out, and there is too much shamming; but set aside these trifling faults, and I have not for a long time (except Scott's and Cooper's) read any novel that I liked so well. Did you sell it to Longmans? Mr. Rothwell's account looks as if we might certainly be cousins; and so it shall be, since he is as willing as I. All that you say of him is delightful. William Harness is very kind: some day or other I hope and believe that "Inez" will be performed with a proper heroine. At present I am so nervous that I can hardly hold a pen. About "Otto," it is not nearly finished; and Mr. Price and all his people are wanting it and asking for it, with a mixture of kindness and respect the most flattering, but with a degree of over-reliance that goes nigh to paralyze the little power I have—they depend on that to retrieve all the mischances of the season, in short, to keep the theatre; and the excess of motive really weighs me down. If they could but get a great play elsewhere *now*, and leave me to finish mine with a less anxious mind, it would be the greatest comfort I could know

—and THEN, "Otto" would be a fine thing; as it is I must do my best. Nothing can exceed the kindness of everybody; but I am become so nervous, that the pressing petition of the Drury Lane people, and their far too high estimate of my power, quite oversets me, and rather tends to impede than to forward my exertions. I hope the Halls will do well, but a school is, as you say, a far better thing than authorship, as witness the dear J——'s, who most thoroughly deserve their good fortune. Miss J—— wrote me word of your visit, and spoke of you most affectionately? We are very sorry to hear of dear Frederick: I wish he had more money, and less work, and this he will have some day or other: Kindest regards and good wishes to him, and to all from our fireside.

Monday, Dec. 13th, 1830.

I only heard yesterday of your illness from our friend Mrs. Hall. She says you are recovering, for which thank heaven! You are one of those inestimable persons who cannot be spared. If not equal to writing yourself, I am sure that Mr. Hofland or Mr. Hoole, or your excellent friend Mrs. H—— will give us a line to say how you are. After Christmas, please God, we shall meet, for "Inez de Castro" is coming out at Covent Garden with Miss Kemble, and you need not doubt but I shall see you as soon as possible after my arrival in town.

About Dec. 1837.

I write, my very dear and kind friend, whilst waiting for Mr. T——, who will take charge of my letter, and of a packet of flower-seeds for dear Mr. Hofland, a peace-offering for not sending the sonnet. I have not attempted one this dozen years, and should only disgrace his beautiful book—sonnets being amongst those pretty writing tricks which require constant habit to be good for anything. Why I wanted the "White-Knights" book was for two reasons; one, that if I had, as I then contemplated, and may perhaps achieve, written an article on the gardens of the neighbourhood, it would have assisted me in details of space, &c.; the other, that if the new proprietor (who has contrived to excite a wonderful degree of curiosity in the neighbourhood by concealing his name) should turn out (as I believe he will) to be a man of large property and excellent taste, it might have helped you off with any pictures or drawings that might be left from that most unlucky speculation. That, however, will be all time enough when I come to know him, and could, perhaps, be managed without the book; and, still more probably, I, who often succeed in gaining a point for persons for whom I care little, and seldom, very seldom, for those in whom I feel a strong interest, should not be happy enough to do good to you, my old and highly-valued friend. Keep the book, therefore. I will send for it if I find it really could do you some service with the possessor of White-Knights. What a story is poor Mr. T——'s! It is wonderful how full of energy those frail and feeble-looking men often are! I feel a most sincere

interest in him, and rejoice not to have heard of his attack until the news arrived of his recovery. Can he really recover? People do come round so wonderfully nowadays, that with youth on his side, and his own strong hold upon hope and life, one is inclined to hope for him, dangerous as his state would seem under other circumstances. He appears to me a very kind and clever man, and what is more rare, perhaps, than either, singularly single-minded. Don't you think this? I grieve over what you say of the Osgoods.* Of his prospects as an artist I am no judge; but I greatly fear that he will find poetry a barren trade. And it seems a pity that they should have left their own country, where everybody that takes the right way may thrive, to come and fetch disappointment in England. I rejoice to find our friend Mr. Lucas so justly appreciated by artists. I wish you knew him; he is a young man who would most heartily value you, and whom you would esteem and love. I *respect* him more than I can tell. His character is so full of all that is right and good; so independent, and yet so unpretending and modest; so acute and so gentle; so prudent and so generous. I have not seen his wife, but it was a love-match, and I cannot doubt his taste, especially his moral taste. He has a large connection amongst the fashionable people; and unless he break away from portrait-painting and take to engraving, which I hope he will not, I cannot but believe that we shall see him very eminent amongst English artists. He has taken three portraits of Queen Adelaide, to whom, he says, no painter has ever done justice. I

* I believe an American couple: she a poetess, he a painter.—C.

should have liked to have seen his pictures. They are in her weeds, which of itself would give a womanly interest to them. I am so glad that you liked my dear father's portrait. I bless God that he continues just as splendid an old man as his picture, though he is lame just now from having had a most providential escape. Getting hastily out of his gig to adjust the reins, he fell, and the wheel passed over his leg: only think of its producing nothing worse than a severe bruise! You and I are, my dear friend, much alike in loneliness. I have only my dear father, and if I have the unspeakable misfortune of surviving him I shall be alone in the world. I have, it is true—and most ungrateful should I be to forget it—many kind friends; but if I lose my dear father there is no one to care for me, no one to love me, or for me to love with the close bond of domestic intercourse or kindred affection. In other respects my destiny is exceedingly like yours, with one great difference, that you, in your splendid historical mansion, suffer from solitude; whilst I, in my poor cottage by the road-side, have an absolute pestilence of visitors. From one o'clock to six there is no cessation, and although some are friends and a few interesting strangers, yet the constant succession of people, with the greater part of whom I have no further acquaintance, is most exceedingly harassing; a waste of time and of spirits which seems to me productive of nothing but fatigue and exhaustion. Sometimes one sees old friends—for instance, Mrs. Opie, whom I had not seen for twenty years, and who came as many miles to visit me, and a very pretty old woman she is,

much prettier than in middle age, when she was coarse. She speaks with great delight of a German countess * and baroness who is come to England to improve in painting, having devoted herself to Art. Her pictures are at Mr. Briggs'.

Dec. (post-mark Dec. 9th) 1837.

I don't know when I have been more distressed than to hear, in the first place, of your very severe illness, greatly as that must be aggravated by the labour, as well as the discomfort, of moving house at this season; in the second, to find that Miss B—— has been encroaching so much upon your kindness by her selfish vanity. I feel this the more strongly since I have unwittingly brought this misfortune upon you, but I assure you that all I dreamt of asking was that you should apply to your own booksellers, and in case of their refusal (I really had thought it possible that they might take the MS. as a gift), that you might return the work to the place whence it came. But there is nothing like the self-conceit of your young lady authoresses of the present day; especially when they affect to write "for the good of their families," "to assist their parents" "out of a high sense of duty," and so forth. I have made up my mind about Miss B—— ever since she offered a bonus of 40*l.* to get this book printed, in other words, to have the *éclat* of authorship, which, I suppose, does tell for something in Ireland, where

* Countess Julie Egloffstein?—C.

letters seem to be at a considerably lower ebb than in Van Diemen's land. I have pretty well settled my opinion of that young lady ever since she offered to fling away that pretty little bit of money, which she would not get back again by forty thousand tales, or forty millions; and I can only apologize most heartily for my share of the infliction, and entreat you to send away the MS., and let the authoress know that there is nothing more to be done in the matter. As to the writing on both sides of the page, I told her at once that that was merely a civil form of refusal on the part of the bookseller—my MSS. are always so written—and such things! interlined, blotted, often upon scraps of paper, backs of letters, newspaper covers, anything that comes to hand. They would not have taken Miss B——'s MS. if the writing had been copperplate. Pray send it back. I am pretty sure that Miss Edgeworth's opinion of her is like mine; and, by the way, it is very likely that her literary trim arose partly from her want of personal attraction, for she is said to be singularly plain—partly from her connection with the Beauforts and Edgeworths—as if talent could be *caught*. God forgive me for being so angry with her, but it is sad to have you troubled in this way, and to feel that I have been the cause of it. Pray give her her *congé*. Illness is always an excuse—a reason—a too valid reason—for declining further trouble in an affair of this sort. There is no earthly reason why Miss B—— might not take the MS. to the booksellers, if Whittaker's people return it, to get rid of her.

Your American verses are charming. Tell Mrs. Osgood how much I am gratified by them, particu-

larly as coming through such a medium. I hope some day or other to have the pleasure of seeing her and Mr. Osgood. As to Mr. Thackeray, I am quite distressed to be so situated that at this moment it seems hardly possible to invite him to share our discomforts. One end of our cottage is absolutely down, the roof off, and the walls not half built up; and the other (containing that very essential part, the kitchen) is merely bare walls. We are all crammed into the tiny centre of the old house, and as *that* must be repaired, painted, &c., we talk of going next week into a cabin two doors off, where my father and myself and one maid can sleep, leaving the other servants here, and coming backward and forward to the room in the garden. Now we put up with this as knowing that future comfort will spring from the present annoyance; but it seems too much to ask a guest to share such inconvenience, at a time of year, too, when my garden is like a ploughed field, and when all enjoyment must be found within doors. Still, if Mr. Thackeray should wish to come, we would do our best to give him a dinner, requesting that he will have the goodness to give us two or three days' notice. It is possible, but not probable, that I may be in town before February. I have been, and still continue very much indisposed. Did I tell you that I had had a magnificent offer from a dear friend in South Wales? A large, airy, roomy house, completely furnished; two gardens, pleasure ground, large rich meadow, rick of old hay, &c., at a merely nominal rent. The country (Caermarthenshire) cheap and beautiful, and only twenty-five hours by mail from

London. I should have accepted this offer—my friend very rich, and without children, and so fondly attached to me that I know the acceptance would have added to her happiness—but my father is too old to move from the place where he is known and valued, and where he is surrounded by his own pursuits and amusements. It would have been a dangerous experiment to transplant a tree seventy-seven years old. By-the-way, you will see a very fine portrait of him at the Exhibition next year; it ought to have been there this. The artist by whom it is painted (Mr. Lucas) has just been here. He has just finished two portraits of Queen Adelaide and her sister, and they are so much approved that he is to make two copies of each picture, and to engrave that of the Queen Dowager, although she will not allow it to be published, to his great regret. He says that he has been successful in doing justice to her fine forehead, and to the look of intensity in her eyes, and that the picture (in weeds) is very interesting; that, in short, great injustice has hitherto been done to her in her portraits. He is a most amiable young man, rising fast. We have been, and are in great anxiety respecting my admirable friend, Mr. Kenyon, who has been, and I fear still continues, dangerously ill. London would be quite another place to me if I lost this kindest friend,—even with him, and two or three others, whose steady goodness even the whirl of the season cannot shake. I feel how entirely right you are as to a residence in town or country. Everybody urges me to London, but *you are right.* The world there travels too fast. The country, the place where you are known, is the place for attach

ment, however pleasant it may be to go and be *fêted* for Sundays once in two or three years. I am glad to hear of you in a larger house. Heaven grant it may bring with it health, prosperity, and happiness.

* * * * * *

Be sure to get rid of Miss B——.

Letters to Miss Anderdon.

March 30th, 1837.

When I first received your beautiful drawing, my dear Miss A——, I was in some hopes of going to town this spring, when I should certainly have taken the opportunity of thanking you in person; but as that prospect has now vanished, I cannot content myself without writing to assure you, with great sincerity, how much I value it both for its own sake and as a proof of your very kind and flattering recollection. We have not seen much of each other, but our walk by the river-side may show as much of the real mind and character as a long series of formal visits; and when I parted from Mrs. A—— —— and yourself after that pleasant day at Mr. Dawson's, it was, I assure you, with a very real wish that we might all three meet again. Accordingly, I was heartily vexed to find that I had been so unlucky as to be far from home when you were both so kind as to call—the more so as I wished to show you my little flower-garden. But next summer will, I trust, bring you again to Farley Hill, and nothing will then, I hope, prevent my having the pleasure of seeing you here.

I cannot tell you how much I love that sunny little picture. I am accused of putting too much sunshine into my pen-and-ink sketches, and am

therefore always glad to be kept in countenance—especially when the effect is so good.

June 2nd, 1838.

Your most beautiful drawings are triply welcome to me: first of all, for their own fidelity and merit; next, as containing so bright and beaming a record of the favourite tree of which this severe weather has deprived us; and last, not least, as coming from *you*, for whom, on so many accounts, I feel an affection and interest which the length and amount of our acquaintance hardly justifies, but which I think you will pardon.

I send you a little token book, printed for private distribution by a friend of mine. It has no literary pretension—except the total absence of all pretension may pass for one in these days of abundant conceit; but when I am at liberty to tell you all about the writer—which, as there is no real reason for concealment, I presume I shall be soon—you will be interested in her, and therefore to a certain degree in her little stories.

I write in great haste, dearest Miss A——, not to miss our kind messenger, Mr. D——, and to pray you to pardon the awkwardness with which I must have expressed my admiration of the charming sketches of Chepstow Castle Gate, and the Clifton Cave. The packet arrived quite safely; and I hoped and believed that in mentioning those, the most

valuable of its contents (next perhaps to your warm-hearted letter—and warmth of heart is priceless), I had implied the receipt of the rest. Ever since your last note I have been waiting, day by day, for one of two things—or, if possible, for both—which leaves our excursion still in uncertainty. The first cause is, as I think I must have told you, my dear father's health. The other is, not having yet had an answer from a friend (Mr. Townsend, author of the "Elizabeth" in the "Tableaux)," whom I empowered to sound the bookseller respecting the book.* I really can hardly bear to write to you whilst still in this uncertainty; and can only reiterate my most earnest and sincere request, that neither Mrs. A—— nor yourself will suffer your plans to be affected by this unavoidable difficulty on my part. It seems to me, my dear young friend, that your delightful drawings, if engraved so as to be better executed and less numerous than in Mr. Wordsworth's book, and more plentiful though not so good as those in Mr. Howitt's (I mean woodcuts, of course), would prove the greatest possible acquisition to the work. Mr. Townsend says, too, that we should get some really good antiquarianism. I know that I could get such at Donnington, which is the first stage of my actual journey: and Mr. Hughes would probably help me farther on.

* This was a joint publication, projected by Miss Mitford and her correspondent. The plan, however, fell through.—C.

No date.

What you tell me of Mr. A——'s feeling towards my dear father enchants me. To parody an expression in one of Mrs. Klopstock's delightful letters to Richardson, "I may say," in all daughterly modesty, "that I am proud of my father." He is of a class fast passing away—essentially English in its honesty, its frankness, its independence, its zealous, thorough-going love of those who have shown kindness, or of goodness, nobleness, and generosity generally, and a bold, uncompromising scorn and hatred of the base and the bad, in whatever station. The tears came into my eyes as I read what you said of Mr. A——'s regard for my dear father—and the feeling is mutual, I assure you. He feels at once an affectionate gratitude for the kindness which you have always shown to us all, and an honest respect for *his*—your father's—rare character. This is a strong point of sympathy between us—and my mother. She, too, was one to remember with tears of love and veneration. It is a great blessing, my dear young friend, and one for which we cannot be too grateful, to look back as we may do to such parents—long, very long, may you be blest by their affectionate protection!

I always love the sight and name of Windsor—redolent to my fancy of the chivalrous associations of the Harrys and Edwards—and of the magic of Shakespeare, whose "Merry Wives" come back upon me as I look upon the old town. The noble trees, too—and the river—and the perfectly English character of the scenery! Then your feeling respecting the Queen. One should be so glad to

find her what one wishes—and you and Mrs. A—— can hardly err in the prepossession which she seems to have inspired. There is an instinct in such matters which commonly strikes right. I have great faith in the impression produced at once by countenance and demeanour. It can hardly err. You and Mrs. A——, who like what elevates our sex—talent united to blameless character, and made available by great industry—would have been interested by a young lady whom I have seen two or three times last week—Miss Hallsted, the orphan daughter of a naval officer who, against I hardly care to say how many competitors of the better sex, carried off the Gresham Prize for a "Life of Margaret Beaufort," mother of Henry VII. It was something for a modest, young, interesting girl to receive this prize at Crosby Hall, for a memoir relating to many of the personages celebrated by the great poet. She seems very frank and right-minded, with an intelligence and perseverance that could not have failed to carry her far above mediocrity in any profession, had she been born to wear doublet and hose. Even as it is, she will, I verily believe, do honour to the petticoat. I liked her exceedingly, and I hope that she liked me. She was on a visit to Lady Sidmouth—an intelligent and cultivated *invalide* who likes nothing so well as to surround herself with the clever and the good —no matter how poor they be—a very honourable way of beguiling the languor of sickness. Our sweet Miss Barrett (to think of virtue and genius is to think of her) was about, when I last heard from her, to remove to a still warmer nest for the

winter. "Her brother," she said, "meant to fold her in a cloak and carry her to the new house in his arms." A touching picture of bodily helplessness and family affection. They all dote upon her, as well they may. Did Mr. and Mrs. A—— know my poor friend Lady O——? She and I were very intimate, and most truly attached; and it is with no common grief that I find her, after having passed through one scene of splendid ruin, involved in one still more agonizing. The debts (our mutual friend Lady N—— says) are four hundred and forty-five thousand pounds. Nothing saved except fifteen hundred per annum settled upon Colonel O—— on his marriage with Miss M——. The daughter's fortune is not paid, as Sir John allowed them five per cent. upon what he promised to leave them—and even ten thousand pounds left by an aunt of Mrs. O——'s to her and her children, and all that could be got from Captain S——, Lady O——'s brother, borrowed and spent by Sir John in the course of last summer. Another friend of mine, a neighbour of Sir John's family in Wales, says that Colonel O—— has agreed to allow them five hundred a year—adding that above a million has been spent by Sir John since he came to the estate. All agree in pitying and exculpating the present Lady O——; —and yet how strange that she should not have seen the signs of the storm. She has five children, and another expected. They are gone abroad.

Three Mile Cross, Oct. 8th, 1838.

It seems to me, my dear and fair young friend, that each of us has been waiting for the other to write; and having been to-day at that ceremony—always interesting to those who know and like the parties—a wedding, I cannot but avail myself of the opportunity of following humbly in the train of Miss Lucy Selby and her sister, Miss Nancy, and letting you (who are as little like Lady G—— as I to Hercules) hear all about it. You, who know ————, will readily imagine that she would plunge into her new duties with a frank and fearless confidence—a buoyant gaiety such as has seldom been seen under the blonde mantilla of a fashionable bridal. The whole family of the bridegroom—Colonel and Mrs. ——, sensible and serious elderly people—a fine girl, their daughter, and three very gentlemanly young men, their sons—the entire party, bearing the stamp of thorough respectability, good feeling, and good manners, arrived last week at Mrs. ——'s; and to-day, at eleven o'clock—flowers strewn under her feet—a church so crowded that she could hardly pass along the aisle—attended by nine bridesmaids (your dear young aunt one of the fair train), and given away by Mr. H——, the light-hearted heiress resigned her maiden state, and took upon herself the grave station of a married woman. She was, as I have said, arrayed in a blonde mantilla and white satin—a little, perhaps, too much dressed for the early hour and the country church—especially as her bridesmaids were attired with great simplicity—but she really looked pretty—so very bright—and

the extraordinary expression of gaiety and happiness, unclouded by one shadow of care or fear, gave a singular character to the bridal breakfast—generally a scene where they who leave a happy home, and they who lose a beloved inmate, are struggling to conceal or to overcome the tender regret and lingering fondness which mingle with every thought. Mrs. —— must have known such feelings—but she conquered them completely—and Fanny drove off, followed by an old shoe filled with salt, thrown after them for good luck, in the midst of some forty or fifty friends and neighbours, and a whole troop of spectators on the lawn, who cheered most gallantly as she was borne off to the air of "God save the Queen," played by a band before the house. She had her troubles, nevertheless. Instead of the French courier whom she desired to have engaged, her spouse wisely hired a steady English servant. He himself made his appearance in a blue coat, instead of the regimentals in which she wished him to be married (very sensible things both these, by-the-by! and a good sign of his judgment); and the four horses which she had predetermined to be grey were, unluckily, of another colour. They are gone to the English lakes (I gave them a letter to Mr. Wordsworth), and intend remaining at Ambleside until the house which they have taken near ——, and which is at present occupied by Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, shall be ready for their reception. I can most truly say that I believe she has carried off with her as many wishes for her welfare and happiness as often befalls a bride. He and his family seem, I think, well calculated to guide her

kindly and wisely.* Mr. and Mrs. A——, whose opinion is so reliable, think very highly of them all. Miss A—— had never been at a wedding, and enjoyed the scene with a smiling, gentle sympathy that was very interesting. It is delightful to see such a thorough and complete absence of selfishness—so entire a power of entering into the joys and sorrows of another. *She* has this most entirely—and it is, like most unselfish qualities, its own reward. I question if any one of that large company enjoyed the day with so deep, although quiet, a contentment.

Oct. 11th.—So far had I written, with the full intention of sending off my news with the bloom on it; but the arrival of a friend from Bath, most unexpectedly, and the necessity of giving my attention to her—that is to say, all the attention that could be spared from my dear father, who has been suffering from a very large and painful boil—hindered my even writing so much as the conclusion of this hurried scrawl. She is gone now, and I hasten to tell you that dear Miss Barrett is at Torquay, and *rather* better—I fear not much.—Mr. T——, too, is going to be married—a second marriage—he being a widower of seven-and-thirty—and to a poetess—a Miss Shepherd, of the neighbourhood of Frome. Besides my Bath friend, we have had some people from America—intelligent people. They tell me that Miss Martineau's deafness was a greater disadvantage than she thought. Besides the necessary crudeness of

* So much for impression and prophecy! A more painful trial has rarely figured in the courts of law than the one not very long subsequent to this bright marriage.

information obtained, not by gradual observation, but from direct questioning, it exposed her to occasional deception, which, on points bearing on her own theories, she swallowed so eagerly as to tempt men more shrewd than gentlemanly to try how much she would believe. *This* they tell me; and I should fear that it is in a degree not unlikely to be true. I can hardly tell you how beautiful our autumn has been. My garden is so gay as to realize your bright drawing—the dahlias literally paint it.

Three Mile Cross, Nov. 5th, 1838.

I thank you very heartily, my dear young friend, for the interesting book, and still more interesting letter, which you have sent me. It is singular that the name of Mary Anning crosses me often. One of my friend Mr. Kenyon's graceful poems is addressed to her; and Charmouth and Lyme (where we lived a year, in a picturesque old house built round a quadrangle, frequently the resort of the great Lord Chatham and his no less celebrated son, when the latter was a child, and required sea bathing) are dear to me, as being full of my first recollections of the sea; my father having been accustomed to take me with him under the cliffs:—he, who had a fancy for all points of natural observation, and would, if he were a young man now, be called a geologist, zoologist, ornithologist, and so forth—he, hammer in hand, examining those rocks so full of interesting fossil remains: I collecting shells and seaweed on the sand. I was only going for nine years' old in

ys; but I remember the visions of those long rambles as well as if they were yesterday, and should like, of all things, to go there again and make acquaintance with Mary Anning. The friendship between her and Miss Bell makes a very pleasing episode in her short and simple story. Once again I thank you for it very heartily.

I hope you will like the "Tableaux." They are said by many eminent critics to be greatly better than last year; and I think so myself. By having been limited by Mr. Tilt to the exact number of pages of the former volume, my own stories were cut up on the proofs—to use the printer's language—Anglicè, after they were actually set up in type—within an inch of their lives: so that I feared they would appear bald and thin, as well as brief. I, however, preferred that risk to the damage that I should have done to my contributors by cutting away their poetry. It seems to me no small gain to have obtained five narrative poems instead of five copies of verses; for hitherto the poetry of Annuals has been of the most vague and purposeless description; whereas I am really proud of my poets. The "Elizabeth" is pure and high-toned; the "Treason of Gomez Arias"* so intensely Spanish, that it might be translated into choice Castilian, and pass for a contemporary ballad of the "Songs of the Cid" (did you ever see Mr. Lockhart's charming collection of "Spanish Ballads?"—I mean ballads translated from the Spanish under that title), and have been chanted by the peasants whom Don Quixote met going afield to their daily labour alternately with the

* By J. R. Chorley.

fight of Ronscevalles—whilst my precious Miss Barrett's tragic, and Mr. Hughes's vivid and chivalrous metrical romance are really above praise. I am proud of my poets, the rather that they are my friends, and persons—every one of them—of high acquirements and great personal worth. Mr. Hughes, especially, is the *beau ideal* of a country gentleman. His mother is the lady so often mentioned in Lockhart's "Life of Scott;" and Sir Walter recommended his favourite daughter to her almost maternal care and guidance when she first came to London, on her husband's being appointed editor of the "Quarterly." You will rejoice to hear that the fairest and dearest of my contributors, my beloved Miss Barrett, is better. May Heaven, in its mercy, grant it! That lovely young creature is to me as a daughter. Your estimate of her poetry is perfectly just. Her health—or, rather, her want of health—has had much to do with the choice of subject and the tone of thought; and I like best those poems "The Island," "The Deserted Garden," that on her own pet name, and "The Sea Mew," which combine more of cheerfulness and simplicity and less of the mystical and the far reaching. As a composition she has done nothing half so fine as "The Romaunt of the Page;" and if she be spared to the world, and should, as she probably will, treat of such subjects as afford room for passion and action, you will see her passing all women, and most men, as a narrative or dramatic poet. After all she is herself in her modesty, her sweetness, and her affectionate warmth of heart, by very far more wonderful than her writings, extraordinary as *they* are. Were not Mr.

and Mrs. A—— much struck by the preface to "The Seraphim?" It is an astonishing piece of writing.

I have just got a book which I want you to see, and which you shall see as soon as you come to Farley Hill—Characters in verse of eminent painters,* by Henry Reeve, Clerk in waiting to the Privy Council; one of the finest young men I ever saw, and the cleverest. It speaks much for him to be appointed, at twenty-three, to an office of so much trust; but his book tells still more. It is one of the pretty gift books printed for private distribution, and of the very highest tone of thought and feeling. You *must* see that pretty volume.—Yes; Pope's Villa is a very interesting place. I saw it many years ago, and your graphic account brought it freshly before my eyes. Did you see Strawberry Hill? I have a fancy for that prince of curiosity-mongers and story-tellers, Horace Walpole—as I have for all that set of coxcombs who, whether in letters—as the aforesaid Horace—or memoirs—as Pepys—give such unconscious and unintended peeps at the poor creature, human nature, and betray their own weaknesses and foibles, whilst they think that they are only chronicling those of their neighbours. I talk, next year, of going to see Park Place and The Vine, the favourite haunts of Horace Walpole; and shall probably find in them and in Strawberry Hill material for a paper on what they were, and what they are. My friend —— has a project for a novel, in letters, in which Horace Walpole should figure as a friend of the hero's—a happy idea, if gracefully executed: and I think he could do it.—You know,

* "Graphidæ."—C.

of course, that Mrs. D—— set off for Frankfort with her niece, and proposes to winter there. Perhaps she could not have better worn away the sense of the vacancy at her fireside which the absence of her lively daughter must occasion. I very heartily wish all good to them both.

I had been expecting your letter with real anxiety, not merely because they, your letters, are amongst the most interesting and welcome that I receive at any time, but from feeling very desirous to hear good accounts of you all, especially of that dear mama, whose delicacy of health always blends a something of fear with the pleasure of seeing and of thinking of her. Since you were here I have had two interesting sets of Americans, Miss Sedgwick and her party, who landed at Portsmouth and came here before going to London—a very nice person she is indeed;—and a still more distinguished visitor, last week, in the shape of Daniel Webster, the man who more completely realizes my idea of a truly great man than any one whom I have ever seen. Has Mr. A—— met him? He is the lion of the year in London, and therefore would probably be rather an object of avoidance than of interest to a person so thoroughly *above* such pursuits as your father. But if he have happened to read any of his speeches, and if our excellent friend Mr. D—— communicates to him the story of his early life, as told to me by one of his bosom friends some years ago (Mr. Ticknor, of

Boston), he will, I am sure, think him worth seeing even at the cost of attending a fashionable party. I wished for you when he and his family were here on Thursday; and really anticipate the pleasure of telling you face to face what I know of his sayings and doings, his looks—for it is the finest and most radiant countenance that I ever saw—and the simple dignity of his manners. It was an evening never to be forgotten.—My dear father, I bless God, continues perfectly well. I have been poorly with influenza and nausea, but am well again. I do really believe that the day the Websters spent here cured me—the pleasurable excitement. My father expects them again. I think it too much to expect. What you tell me of Hayley's residence is very interesting, very. Old Mr. Cary (the translator of Pindar and of Dante) came here last year just after seeing Cowper's garden room, and described it as inconceivably small, nor capable of holding more than one chair and one small table, or two chairs without the table; in short, a mere citizen summer-house, such as retired tradesmen of five years ago used to sit and smoke in of summer afternoons. I cling to Hayley. You would like his essays on epic poetry, history, &c. for the grace of the verse and the varied learning of the notes. There is beside his Autobiography, which I read with great interest at the time of publication, and have never been able to fall in with since. It is in two volumes quarto; but you will not be afraid of the length. I wish I could meet with it again. Heaven bless you, my dear young friend! I am writing against time.

* * * * *

To be sure I will come and see you. It is one of the pleasures I reckon most upon in going to London; but when that will be is unsettled.

I promised dearest Mrs. A—— yesterday a copy of a letter from Miss Barrett, which I thought would interest her, and which I annex. She says, after some expressions of kindness, "Long before, and much more in detail, I should have written to you, but the shock of poor Mr. Haydon's death overcame me for several days. Our correspondence had ceased a full year and a half; but the week preceding the event he wrote several notes to me; and, by his desire, I have under my care boxes and pictures of his, which he brought himself to the door. Never did I imagine that it was other than one of the passing embarrassments so unhappily frequent with him. Once before he had asked me to give shelter to things belonging to him, which, when the storm had blown over, he had taken back again. I did not suppose that in this storm he was to sink—poor noble soul!

"And be sure that the pecuniary embarrassment was not what sunk him. It was a wind still more east: it was the despair of the ambition by which he lived, and without which he could not live. In the self-assertion which he had struggled to hold up through life, he went down into death. He could not bear the neglect, the disdain, the slur cast upon him by the age, and so he perished. The cartoon disappointment, the grotesque bitterness of the

antagonism of Tom Thumb: these things were too much—the dwarf slew the giant. His love of reputation, you know, was a disease with him; and, for my part, I believe that he died of it. That is my belief.

"In the last week he sent me his portrait of you among the other things. When he proposed sending it, he desired me to keep it for his sake; but when it came, a note also came to say that he 'could not make up his mind to part with it; he would lend it to me for awhile:' a proof, among the rest, that his act was not premeditated—a moment of madness or a few moments of madness: who knows!

"I could not read the inquest nor any of the details in the newspapers.

"Oh! I knew that you would be shocked beyond all power of words."

So far our great poetess. If you can make out my hand—worse than usual to-day from heat and hurry—you will perhaps, when you have done with it, let Mr. P—— see this copy of Miss Barrett's note.

January 1st, 1840.

The first letter that I am able to write, my dear young friend, is one of mingled regret and gratitude to *you*. If you heard from Mr. D—— that I saw them for a few minutes on Saturday, you must have expected that which made a part of my own hope for a very short time on that day, that I might be well enough to get to Farley Hill for a brief visit after church on Sunday. But Mr. May

arriving just as Mr. and Mrs. D—— departed, told me, as proved true, that in less than an hour I should be glad to go to bed again, and there I have been until this afternoon—Tuesday—when I may, I hope without self-deceit, call myself better. It is a blessing for which I cannot be too thankful, that my dear father has borne the trial of my being so completely laid up (for ill as I have been for many months *by night*, it has from that very circumstance come less immediately under his notice) without his own health suffering from his affectionate solicitude; and *if* any permanent amendment should take place, and in my state, and this poor play of mine, and the equally unfortunate Drury Lane Theatre, come to good, I shall at least realize one high gratification in the seeing you and yours as soon and as often and for as long a time as the whirl of London will permit. I wish this so very much, that I hardly dare to think of it as intently as I could do from the feeling that the thing upon which one does fix one's heart does not often come to pass. And yet sometimes it does. And at all events I *will* have the pleasure of hoping. You must get dear Mr. D—— to tell you the story of the play. He knows all about it. The two dangers (quite between ourselves)—I believe there are three—are that Drury Lane may not be able to keep open—that "Rizzio" (a play written by Mr. Haines) may fail—or that, in mere desperation, "Otto" may be brought out just to produce one or two good houses. This a friend of mine, Mr. Martin (always quite between ourselves) wrote to caution me about to-day; but I cannot

think it possible. That Wallack has not arrived is nothing to me, since he comes in April, and we do not want him before April, except as it affects our unfortunate lessee. Did you ever think to care so much for that strange world behind the scenes, with all its chances and changes, as your kindness for me has led you into?

Let me now thank you earnestly and heartily for your exquisite piece of china—how very much too good you are to me!

I received last week a sheet of "Christmas Carols" from our friend Mr. Townshend, and in thanking him, as I must do in a day or two (oh! the letters I have before me to answer!), I shall beg him to send one to you. The very title has a charm to my old-fashioned ears; and, without critical discussion, which perhaps they might not stand, I think you will like the verses.

January 16th, 1840.

Your dear and most kind letter, my dear young friend, gave me singular pleasure. When occasion serves I shall be delighted to see your account of Windsor—a most interesting place—and still more to talk of your readings at the Museum. The catalogues used to be deficient; and I believe that Mr. Cary was removed (a most unjust and disgraceful removal) before that great evil was remedied. But, still, what a glorious library it is! The readings which you call desultory are still amongst the most profitable, so far as general information goes—

that gradual increase of information which constitutes so large a part of the self-education of cultivated women. To me there was no pleasure so great, when I was young, and followed reading for its own sake as a pursuit and gratification without any definite object, as to follow out as far as I could any subject that struck my fancy, hunting up all the works bearing upon it that came within the reach of my limited knowledge, languages, and small acquaintance with books. My knowledge is still exceedingly little, considering the opportunities that I have had, and the kindnesses that people always have shown me in assisting my poor efforts. Still, I am convinced that of the very little I do know, by far the greater part—the *best* part, in every sense of the word—arose from my delight in musing over any subject that I had once started. It was but the other day that I found a list at least thirty years old, headed, in my homely way, "Books that I want to read"—and *one* of those I only met with since my present, or rather (if I may say so) late illness. So it chanced. That nightmare of a book, "Jack Sheppard," had given me a desire to look again at a few of the lives of those worthies yclept highwaymen and pirates; and sending into Reading for such a collection, *one* was returned by my messenger—not Johnson's old work, but a fine illustrated, grand-looking volume of the present day, containing, in the midst of the true records, the real Simon Pures, one of the very "books wanted" of my list—Defoe's "Colonel Jack"—inserted at full length, without the name of the author, or the slightest intimation or suspicion

of its being as arrant a fiction as "Robinson Crusoe," or "The Journal of the Plague." What a tribute to the truthfulness of the most truthful of writers!—and how strange that the list and the book should turn up together! I have a passion for trials; and by another coincidence have been hearing much lately of "John Frost," one of the sedition prisoners of forty — or rather fifty years ago—and have been reading his trial—(he is still alive)—and feeling, for the first time, how great an advocate Lord Erskine was. In reading his speeches I was—oh, so disappointed—having seen him often at Mr. Perry's, and liked him, as no one could help doing. But in those three volumes of "Speeches" there was only enough of the evidence and the speeches on the other side to render his share intelligible; all else was omitted or compressed. Now this trial of John Frost contained every word spoken by everybody—and the perfect adaptedness of his address, the manner in which *all* circumstances, however slight—the very looks of the witnesses and gestures of the opposing counsel were taken advantage of by this consummate master of the forensic art, impressed me more than I can express. What a strange thing political fanaticism is! This old man, ninety turned, has been obliged to be cheated by one of his kindest friends to induce him to accept a service from one whom he had interested in his favour, because the party wishing to help him is a Conservative. It is honest of the poor old man, however—and all that is honest must be respected.

Lest Mr. D—— should forget the detail of

"Otto's" mischances I will tell them to you myself. They only came to my knowlege piecemeal. The play having been actually presented and accepted without my being apprised of it, and the original presenter being, I fear, dying; so that I might have remained in ignorance of the whole matter had not poor old John Frost's benefactor taken my affairs in hand also; and, being a man full of zeal and kindness, and also a man of business and of excellent judgment, it could not be in better hands; so that there is a fairer chance for its production, barring theatrical contingencies, than I have dared to look forward to. But when you hear what mischances have occurred, you will feel with me that, until the curtain have drawn up, and been let down again, there is no reckoning either upon its production or its success; although the former is, perhaps, the most uncertain of the two. Well! Mr. Wallack has a theatre in New York. He was, however, engaged to play the hero of Mr. Jerrold's "Spendthrift," a comedy merging probably into tragedy. I don't know, but I have a notion—not told to me, but a guess of my own—that it will turn out to be a compound of "The Rake's Progress" and "The Heir of Lynne." After this he was intended by the management of Drury Lane to play "Otto." He started for London, and had hardly left the Hudson—was hardly out of sight of the city—when his own theatre was burnt to the ground. Three days after his arrival in England came the news of this deplorable event, and he, of course, was compelled to return immediately to America. They were more anxious than ever to produce my play; and still

without my knowing a word of the matter; sent a summons to Mr. Warde, a man of birth and education, son of General Prescott—Warde being an assumed name—but so extravagant, that he has been several times through the Insolvent Court, and was then in Jersey to recruit his health. His answer (a most characteristic one) was that he could not stir without a remittance of one hundred pounds; which, if it had been sent, would probably have been an inducement for him to set off elsewhere. Then the part was put into Mr. Elton's hands, who immediately went to Mr. Talfourd (you'll be glad to hear that he has behaved with great kindness through this affair); Mr. Elton then went to Mr. Talfourd, and said, frankly, that the play was too good to be ventured with an actor so inadequate as himself. How very much one regrets that Mr. Elton should not have voice or figure for a leading part in a great theatre; but such is, unfortunately, the case. That Mr. Macready, when urged to play the character, produced a play out of his own pocket, altered *by*, he says—I suppose the truth is, *for* himself. So that now the matter comes round again to Mr. Wallack, who is expected in February; Mr. Macready's engagement terminating in March, and the present expectations that "Otto" will be produced in April. Still, Mr. Wallack's theatre may be burnt down again; or *our* theatre may not be able to keep open; or Mrs. Sterling—who I presume is married—may be confined, as happened in the case of Mr. Talfourd's play; or any one of ten thousand unforeseen occurrences may prevent the representation. There is a young man, not yet upon the London boards,

for whom Mr. Harness wishes me to wait. But there are obstacles there also; and, upon the whole, it will be best to accept Mr. Wallack, if we can get him; although the prospect of this actor, certainly a man of high genius, will serve to comfort me in case of a disappointment.

Tell dear Mrs. A——, whom I cannot help considering as a kind of connexion of the Mitfords, I should be so glad and proud to make out such a relationship, that I have been recommending Mr. Howitt to visit Mitford Castle, in the second volume of his new and, as I hear, very beautiful book, "Visits to Remarkable Places." He is going to Northumberland and Durham for the purpose of completing that volume; and I really do not think he would find any border ruin more interesting, from its antiquity, situation, and extent, or less hacknied—not having fallen at all in Scott's way. The difficulty will be with the owner, who, having in his younger days trifled with fair ladies, had been trifled with in turn. His doings in the way of flirtation were curious. First of all, he philandered at different times with three young ladies of his own race and name, and jilted them all—(it is right to add that I was not one of the chosen and abandoned) —then he was all but married to a Miss S——, who avenged his previous delinquencies by jilting him; then he returned to his own family, and was engaged to a granddaughter of the historian of Greece; but having a fall in hunting, he made the most of it, and put off the marriage for fifteen years, under the plea of illness, hunting every open day all the while. At last Colonel M—— died; and Miss M. losing her

home, some uncle or cousin asked Mr. —— very seriously whether he meant to complete the engagement. If this had not occurred, I do really believe that he would have remained a bachelor to this hour. He married late in life, and, having no family, successively educated two nephews, who turned out ill; so that he dismissed them with a bare sufficiency, and is now a very sick man (the great Osbaldeston estates at Huxmanby being now joined to the barony of Mitford), with many good qualities, but so soured by his disappointment respecting his natural heirs that the pride in his ancient name, which distinguished him above most men that I have known, has turned into a contrary feeling; and I verily believe that he dislikes all allusion to his ancestors and their deeds. Now this is a pity. However, if William Howitt's book be not filled up, I don't think he will much mind the discouragement of the proprietor. I wish *we* could go there together. What a charming drawing you would make of the old keep, placed as it is between the fords of the Wansbech, that clear, rapid, gushing river which I seem to see and hear at this moment, sparkling and gurgling in the sunshine, a thing of life! But this is a fairy vision, too bright to come true. And now good-night, my very dear young friend. I must not indulge in these letters—for it *is* an indulgence—I must set to work, hard to work. Tell Mr. A—— that both Mr. May and my father thought that another twelvemonth like the last would have cost my life—and then my dear father! Think how intensely and humbly thankful I am for the present brighter prospect. I must

expect some fallings back of course. Of my precious Miss Barrett I have not heard for a longer time than I care to think of. I only hope that the letter is lost. One of mine, to Mr. Harness, posted by a person as reliable as ourselves *has been*. It was prepaid, and William Harness says that none so sent are safe. I don't care much about politics, but certainly no Whig doing ever answers. Heaven bless you! Now good-bye, sweet one! It is lucky for you that I am too busy to write many such letters.

March 26th, 1840.

Mr. Dawson will have told you of my dear father's sad accident. He, however, himself does not, I think, certainly know that one rib was broken, if not more, and the right arm. All this at eighty makes a sad amount of suffering. At present the being totally disabled, and the loss of sleep and appetite caused by his confinement, have had a very bad effect upon his spirits—he won't see any one, and is very much depressed indeed. But milder weather, and the season is now so far advanced that surely we may hope for milder weather, would soon set this to rights by aid of the pleasant remedies of air and exercise; so that beyond the exceeding painfulness of seeing him suffer, and not being able to alleviate his suffering—for the only sign that he gives of pleasure in my company is by being very much more uncomfortable when I am away—so that I have hardly left him for an hour at a time by day or by night, and am now writing at his bedside,—beyond this exceed-

ingly depressing effect of his depression, I have before me the cheering hope, under Providence, of his recovery. I am better than might have been expected from such an union of fatigue and confinement. The motive keeps me up—and I hope to have strength granted me to accomplish a very long and laborious work which I expect a bookseller to negotiate about as soon as my father gets well enough to receive him. This anxiety is no very good preparation for a heavy and tedious task. But if my father be spared to me, I must shut myself up, except during my walks, and try all I can to unite the double duty of attending my dear father and providing for his support—all the more needful from the double expenses of his long illness and my own very bad health—and this accident. 'I ought not to worry you with this, my sweet young friend. But it weighs upon me like lead, and will force itself out when writing to one of whose affection I am certain, and whose sympathy is in itself a consolation. Besides, it must be an excuse for a long silence and brief notes. I greatly fear that you will not see dear Miss Barrett. Since the first of October she has not been dressed—only been lifted from her bed to the sofa, and for the last month not even taken out of bed to have it made. Yet she still writes to me, and the physicians still encourage hope — but her voice has not for six months been raised above a whisper — so that I fear it is hopeless to think of her seeing any one except her own family. She often mentions you, and always affectionately. The shutting up of Drury Lane will probably prevent any chance of the pro-

duction of "Otto" at that theatre during the present season—although it seems the opinion of the people connected with that house that if it be taken by some monied adventurer the chance will be fairer than before. For such an opening we must wait patiently.

November 28th, 1840.

If you have seen Mr. A——, my dear young friend, and he has had time, and has remembered so trifling a circumstance, he will perhaps tell you that a company of theatrical amateurs, calling themselves the Shakespearian Club, having got up my "Rienzi" at the Opera House, and I having business in town, I accepted their offer of one of the best boxes in that splendid theatre, and went up for a few days—strongly urged thereto by my father, who was, you may be sure, unusually well, or I should not have left him. Mr. D—— went with us, and I leave it to him to tell you of the splendid getting-up, the wretched acting of Angelo (some young Lord, I suppose, for we are quite in the dark about the performers—best so, perhaps), and of a certain exchange of garments between William Harness and himself, infinitely comical in itself, and more so in its locality—such a change of coats never, I will venture to say, having occurred before within the walls of Her Majesty's Theatre. After this I saw Mr. Wallack off the stage and on—off I like him better than any actor I ever knew. He has about him a sincerity, an openness, and straightforwardness, together with an elasticity and buoyancy

of manner that please alike the taste and the judgment. One never could doubt him after a three hours' conversation; and on the stage, in the uphill part of Ulric, in "Werner," I was really charmed with his chaste and beautiful performance—anything but melodramatic and American. He is determined to produce "Otto" next season (beginning the middle of March) at the Haymarket, *if he can;* and if not, I feel convinced that at some time or other, whenever he have the power, the play will be done. He wants me to write for him a domestic drama or a comedy—anything, in short—and I shall try as soon as I can, that is to say, as soon as I have done the first tale of one volume * which is to precede the two volumes of stories already written. I have much upon my hands, my dear young friend, too much—considering that my dear father takes more and more of my time—going out less and less, and hardly liking me to leave him for an hour—and a kind neighbour is in such distress that I ought to see her every day; and Mrs. N—— is in Reading for the winter to be near me, and I ought to see her; and people send to me to do things which you would hardly believe. Within this week a young friend has asked me to edit her poems, another to write up and present her tragedy, and a third person (whom I never saw) to read a MS. novel. This very day came a letter from America announcing that I had been constituted a member of a literary society, and that all the members were expected to

* This was "Atherton," the completion of which always hung as an incubus of weight and trouble upon Miss Mitford's conscience.—C.

furnish a discourse!!! The time all these things take! The inspiration of my friend was the "Quarterly" article.

March 28th, 1841.

Most deeply do I sympathize with you, my ever dear young friend, on this sad accident to your dear and excellent mother. I have never ventured to express the extent of my admiration and esteem for that truly estimable and admirable person—one who unites to the true sweetness of a gentle-hearted woman, and the humility of a sincere Christian, so much that is high and lofty in thought and character—pure, simple, true, and kind, as ever trod this earth! Even if I were not bound to her by a thousand kindnesses, and, above all, by her own generous sympathy—even if she were not your mother—she is one whom I could but love for her sweetness, and revere for her goodness; and when to this is added all that I owe her for her constant attention to myself and my dear father, as well as the interest inspired by her fragile delicacy of person, and her transparent purity of mind—to say nothing of the strong claim which one so dear to you must have upon my affections—I do most unfeignedly assure you that, except my own father, I could not have been more shocked or grieved at an accident to any one. Busy as you must be, I cannot but entreat you to let us have just one line, from time to time, to say how your dear patient is getting on. Is it the leg that is fractured? I fear so by your saying that she

is confined to her couch. But grieved as I am—as *we both* are, for my dear father, who has lost nothing of his warmth of heart, and who always looked upon dear Mrs. —— as a countywoman and a kinswoman, is, I think, as sorry as myself—grieved as we are, we have great hope of a speedy and complete recovery, a hope grounded not only in the great skill of the surgeon, and the favourable season, but on the patience of the sufferer, and the certainty that the ministerings of a devoted affection (the very best restoratives which this world can offer) will be at her bedside by night and by day. You have your dear and excellent aunt, too, my dear young friend, as well as your admirable father. How fortunate that it did not happen at Worthing! Moreover, they treat these things now so skilfully and so successfully. My dear father who broke his arm and two ribs in London, this time twelvemonth, and came home without allowing himself to be seen by a medical man, has entirely, even at his age, regained the use of his arm. I don't think that he ever, in the severe weather of last winter, felt the fracture; and my dear mother's mother, who, at past seventy, broke both bones of her leg—a compound fracture—recovered in the same complete manner, no lameness remaining. I trust in Providence that dear Mrs. —— will regain, speedily and perfectly, the use of the limb, and that *you* will not suffer from the anxiety and fatigue. Be sure and tell me how you all are. It is a true interest, my sweet young friend, and not a request of form.

How kind of you, at such a time, to think of my poor affairs. My bad writing has misled you as

to the name, which is Umfried. I have had the influenza, but am better—my father tolerably well—and you will rejoice to hear that sweet Miss Barrett is much mended. We are greatly distressed at losing our kind friends, the D——s, who have, at last, let their place. Once again, Heaven be with you all!

No date.

No, my sweet love, that charming drawing from Carlo Dolce is not, nor ever can have been, at all like our exquisite friend.* Its beauty, great as it is, is the result of harmony; hers proceeded from contrasts—a slight, girlish figure, very delicate, with exquisite hands and feet, a round face, with a most noble forehead, a large mouth, beautifully formed, and full of expression, lips like parted coral, teeth large, regular, and glittering with healthy whiteness, large dark eyes, with such eyelashes, resting on the cheek when cast down; when turned upward, touching the flexible and expressive eyebrow; a dark complexion, with cheeks literally as bright as the dark China rose, a profusion of silky, dark curls, and a look of youth and of modesty hardly to be expressed. This, added to the very simple but graceful and costly dress by which all the family are distinguished, is an exact portrait of her some years ago. Now she has totally lost the rich, bright colouring, which certainly made the greater part of her beauty. She is dark and pallid; the hair is almost entirely hidden; the look of youth gone (I

* Miss Barrett.—C.

think she now looks as much beyond her actual age as, formerly, she looked behind it); nothing remaining but the noble forehead, the matchless eyes, and the fine form of the mouth and teeth—even now their whiteness is healthy. Your dear mama, so well versed in the appearances of sickness, will understand what I mean, and read in it a symptom favourable to our beloved friend's restoration. The expression, too, is completely changed; the sweetness remains, but it is accompanied with more shrewdness, more gaiety, the look not merely of the woman of genius—that she always had—but of the superlatively clever woman. An odd effect of absence from general society, that the talent for conversation should have ripened, and the shyness have disappeared—but so it is. When I first saw her, her talk, delightful as it was, had something too much of the lamp—she spoke too well—and her letters were rather too much like the very best books. Now all that is gone; the fine thoughts come gushing and sparkling like water from a spring, but flow as naturally as water down a hillside, clear, bright, and sparkling in the sunshine. All this, besides its great delightfulness, looks like life, does it not? Even in this weather—very trying to her—she has been translating some hymns of Gregory Nazianzen, which I send you together with "The House of Clouds" (you can return them when quite done with), and is talking of a series of articles for the "Athenæum," comprising critiques on the Greek poets of the early Christian centuries, with poetical translations. I had rather she wrote more "Cloud Houses," and have told her so;—and, above all, I had rather see a great

narrative poem, of an interest purely human (for one can't trust her with the mystical), doing justice to that great man, Napoleon, to whom no justice has yet been done in any English work, from Lord Byron's "Ode," to Scott's "History." Besides these bits of our beloved friend, I have sent for you, to Farley Hill, the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." I delight in those old ballads, and so, I think, will you. When you write to the fair Emma, ask her, with the "Minstrelsy," to send you the books she was so good as to lend me, "Palmyra,"* and "Rome in the Third Century."* Your dear mama will like them as well as yourself. There is a classical grace, a calm wisdom, a truly Christian spirit running through both. If one did not think of Dr. Channing and Daniel Webster, one could not believe that the writer was American; but I suppose he has been much in Europe; and the men who have kept company with John Kenyon and "others his fellows" are, of course, very different from the pests who come forcing themselves into one's houses, and then send back minute descriptions and stories, false and true, of oneself and one's concerns.

How I wish, dearest, that you were still at Farley Hill—still within reach—this, or rather that I was still within reach of you both, that we might have a good chat over Stilling's strange, amusing book, full of German good faith and of good feeling, with all its simplicity—ay, and of shrewdness too. Dear Miss Barrett knows you, and your dear mama, through me, as well as you know her, and mentioned you only yesterday, with high regard, as my "sweet

* By Ware.

young friend." Did I ever tell you that I have another young friend, Henrietta H——,* whom I should so like to make known to you? By a strange coincidence, she resembles you strongly in person, acquirement, and character—writes well even now—will write *very* well—is tall, fair, and stately, decidedly handsome, from grace and expression, cares for nothing but literature and art and her happy home, where, with a father and mother who doat upon her, a younger sister in very delicate health, and a splendid library of the best books, old and new, chiefly old, she leads a life singularly useful, virtuous, and contented. There is about her great vigour and power. She has, from a child, lived amongst clever men, read the very best books, kept very good company; and from her fair, expansive brow, and her firm and manly handwriting, to her skill in modelling, and her large and liberal mind, I know no one, except Miss Barrett and Mrs. ——, whom I am so sure of your liking.—They are Whigs—that you would not mind—but all that a clergyman's family ought to be in conduct and character—the mother benevolent and kind, the father a strikingly cultivated man, the sister gentle and interesting, and my Henrietta a very noble and very charming creature. Surely, some day I shall be able to make you known to each other; but Miss Barrett first. If my dear father be well enough, I must come to town for a day or two in May or June; and then, if it please God to continue her present amended health, I will take you to her bedside. I would go to town on purpose, so sure am I that the acquaintance—the friendship,

* Miss Harrison—late Mrs. Acton Tindal.—C.

for such it will prove—will conduce to the happiness of both, living as you do so comfortably within reach of each other, caring for the same things, and with parents who would, on either side, be so ready to promote the intercourse. You will meet exactly on the table-land of that best class in the whole world, I do verily believe—the affluent and cultivated gentry of England; and they seem as domestic, as free from mere fashionable dissipation, as yourselves. In reading "Tom Cringle's Log" to my father, the other day, I find that Mr. Scott, the author, speaks of the Speaker of the House of Assembly in Jamaica as the handsomest and most agreeable man in the island. Now, he must have been Miss Barrett's uncle, who held that station for very many years before his death, which occurred two or three years ago, without children, so that his property came to our friends; and I can well believe that such a description would apply to Mr. Barrett's brother. Most unexpectedly, this dear friend has done my health much good. She (with a kindness like your own, my dear and kind friends) sends frequently to my father whatever she thinks likely to suit him, and forwarded, since I saw you, some of the rare West India chocolate, entirely free from oil, which cannot be bought in England. He dislikes the flavour, and did not taste it; but I, having heard that Dr. Jephson recommended it to the most difficult amongst his dyspeptic patients, tried a small quantity, and have found astonishing relief from the use of it with a dry crust of brown bread. This was a real blessing; for, in consequence, I believe, of anxiety and watching (my poor father's cramp requiring me to be with

him often all night), I had been falling back exceedingly. This may not last, but even the remission is a blessing for which I cannot be sufficiently thankful. A charm seems to hover over such kindnesses as hers and yours, my sweetest. My father often says so when enjoying his excellent tea, and looking at the prettiest cap that I ever possessed. He makes me take it out of its drawer to show it to him; for I shall not wear it till Agnes's birthday, the 24th, when I must pass an hour or two with dear Mrs. N——. She will be fifteen. Never worry, sweetest, about the "Autobiography." It will turn up. I am lucky in small things.

July 15th, 1841.

I cannot tell you, my dear love, how sincerely I rejoice in your comforting intelligence of Mrs. ——'s extraordinary progress towards recovery. Inconvenient as crutches are, still the being able to get into the air, or the seaside, and amongst the fields, seems to me such a blessing that I cannot sufficiently congratulate you upon the event. Since I wrote to you I have had a very great escape. Mr. Foster, of Clewer, is building a large house in the Elizabethan style. His drawing-room commands a splendid view of Windsor Castle; and when I went there about three weeks ago to pay my annual visit to his greenhouse, he insisted on my going with him to look at the view from the windows. The floors were not laid down; but I am, as you know, active for my age and sure-footed, and had

he left me to take care of myself should have done well. Unluckily, he insisted upon leading me, and stepping upon a mason's hod, it tripped him up, and he fell through the rafters to the ground, about four feet and a half, dragging me *across* the joists. Perhaps no two people ever had a greater escape of life and limb. Of course both were bruised, and, in addition to grazing the left leg from the knee to the instep, the jar upon the bottom of the spine was so severe that I cannot even now turn in my bed. All this only deepens the sense of thankfulness, especially that my father was absent. The alarm would have killed him. One extraordinary thing is, that my bad dream (everybody, I suppose, has one in cases of incipient illness, &c., &c.) has always been of falling through decayed floors, and that the real sensation exactly resembled the one felt in sleep—for instance, the time seemed almost infinitely prolonged, and I thought that screaming would produce succour, and yet could not cry out. I recovered my spirits soon, and visited Ockwells on my way home, as I had intended. When next you go to Windsor you must see that most interesting house. There are three plates of it in Nash's great work. It has a hall, with the dais and music gallery, and two tiers of windows covered with the arms of the Romeyns (by whom it was built in 1437), in the most perfect preservation—there are cloistered passages—the guard-room close by the porch, the buttery hatch, &c., &c., as if built yesterday—and the front of the house, with its gables, is ornamented by the most splendid oak-carving, as delicate as an Indian fan. Of course they have

Nash's "England in the Olden Time" at the library. Do look at it there. It is now occupied as a farm-house, but still in perfect preservation, and the farmer's wife very intelligent indeed. You must see Ockwells. Also we have a most interesting house six or seven miles from hence —Ufton Court—where Arabella Fermor lived after her marriage, and died. The situation is exquisite —the terrace second only to Windsor—and the house itself full of secret doors, and places of hiding for priests (it was a Catholic house) in those days of intolerance which form the disgrace of our country.—The "Lucy" is a seedling of this year, and one of the most beautiful that I have ever seen; two plants shall go to Farley Hill as soon as struck. I do hope that when you fix on your country-house it may not be far from hence, and that I may be of some use in stocking your flower-garden. I have no other wealth in the world —nothing else to give; and what a happiness it would be to me to put some of all my plants into your parterres and green-houses—to share with you my geraniums and the other plants which have made our garden during the last month or two as gorgeous as a painter's palette! My dear father is very feeble, and very much depressed, and I give all my time to nursing him and reading to him.—I ought not, for I ought to reserve my own spirits for the purpose of earning money; but without me he is so wretched that I have not courage enough to leave him. It is sad cowardice, but you will comprehend it. He moans for hours together unless I be reading to him.—I bless God, my beloved young

friend, that you will never know this strife of duties! I have suffered less than might have been expected in consequence of this fall, though of course the daily operation was for some time most painful. All blessings be with you all.

If you have a mind to see a specimen of the very coarsest Americanism ever put forth, read the "Literary Gazette" of this last week.—I remember, my dear love, how much and how justly you were shocked at Miss Sedgwick's* way of speaking of poor Miss Landon's death; but when you remember that her brother and nephew had spent twice ten days at our poor cottage—that she had been received as their kinswoman, and therefore as a friend, you may judge how unexpected this coarse detail has been. It will vex her nephew, who is a thorough gentleman, and injure the future Americans who present themselves in London. The "Athenæum" will give you no notion of the original passage nor the book itself—for John Kenyon, meeting with it at Moxon's, cancelled the passage—but too late for the journals, except the "Athenæum." Of course its chief annoyance to me is the finding the aunt of a dear friend so grossly vulgar. Her father was Speaker of Congress. Do get the "Literary Gazette"—for really it must be seen to be believed.

* Alluding to the book, by the author of "Hope Leslie," in which English houses and English society—and, especially, the circumstances and habits of Miss Mitford—were discussed in the most unscrupulous American fashion.—C.

She did not come the day she expected, but the next —causing me to break two engagements. Heaven bless you all, my ever dear love!

October 4th, 1841.

I cannot sufficiently thank you all, my dear young friend, for your most kind and acceptable present. How acceptable you will imagine when I tell you that *this* and *last* evening are the only two during which my dear father has taken no liquid in his tea—having enjoyed that most grateful beverage in a manner the most delightful to me to witness. Hitherto, for many weeks, he has drunk tea just as one form of liquid, pouring a full cup into a large tumbler half full of cold water, and swallowing it at a draught. This he has done cup after cup; and then, within half an hour, he has called for water, lemonade, ginger beer—anything, everything, until I have been more distressed than I can tell, from the certainty that he was injuring his stomach, irreparably injuring it, without even the momentary gratification of quenching the thirst from which he suffers so much. Since the arrival of your most liberal supply, however, he has sipped it in real enjoyment of the flavour (enhanced, I think, by appreciation of the kindness), and it has accordingly relieved him more than I could have believed possible. Certainly it does not look like the same leaf as tea we have been buying from the country grocers, who, since the war with China, have vended any trash under that much abused name. Once again accept, and offer for

us to Mr. and Mrs. O—— A——, our truest thanks. It is strange that I guessed you to be the donors. Your often experienced attention has authorized me in laying any stray kindness to your door—and this I was convinced came from your ever generous hands. My father is most thankful for it. The tears came into his eyes when I told him that Mr. O—— A—— had had the goodness to select the teas himself.

I only saw the grandson for a moment. He seemed very courteous; and Mr. A——'s manner convinced me that he was pleased with him. Your grandpapa is looking remarkably well—wonderful man as he always is; and we must not forget that your fair cousin *chose* her helpmate—a great point so far as her happiness is concerned. I was very sorry when, calling at Farley Hill a few days after, to find that they were gone. I should have liked to have seen her and to have heard her account of her own family. Does the youngest Miss C—— still continue to write? Her father showed me some verses of considerable fancy and fluency.

November 1841.

Did I tell you that at Mr. Lucas's I fell in with the young artist who illustrates Mr. Dickens's and Mr. Lever's works—Mr. Browne? If you have happened to look at those very dramatic and story-telling little pictures, you will, I think, be struck with their extraordinary individuality and variety. As soon as Mr. A—— returns to Farley Hill, I expect that he and Mr. Lucas will come down to us

for the purpose of seeing his fine collection, chiefly the Salvator Rosa and the Murillos, of which Mr. Lucas never ceased to talk. Mr. Haydon, whom I missed, is coming to me on Saturday to talk about his fresco. It is very delicate and silvery; but I cannot but think the want of shadow will tell against it in a large picture—no depth. It might do for Cupids and Graces, and for Coreggio's bright-haired angels; but no human being, except Queen Elizabeth, can one fancy without shade—which almost means without light. Nevertheless it is very pure and bright; and I shall like to hear the artist (who talks well) talk about it. I wish you were to be of the party. Every day at tea we talk of Mr. O—— A——'s exquisite kindness. I could not speak of it at Farley Hill because there was company. I longed to do so; for towards such persons there is a real and a deep pleasure in gratitude—in the expression as well as the feeling.

Besides that sweetest and highest of women, our precious Miss Barrett, you will like the rest of the family. They have some fine pictures, and there is a miniature of Miss Barrett when a child, with wings, upon a snuff-box, which really seems a foreshowing of her character, it is so spiritual and lovely. See how I go back to that beloved one! But you will pardon the fondness that prompts the repetition; and some day or other you will join in the feeling as thoroughly as myself.

December 5th, 1841.

I thank you most heartily, my dear young friend, for your most kind and affectionate letter. You will rejoice to hear that my dear father is better. He has had a wretched cough, and having recovered from that, the sense of being better, of having been worse, seems to have taken a cheering effect upon his spirits. Even now he is what any one seeing him only occasionally would perhaps hardly believe, so completely does his habitual depression contrast with his momentary exhilaration; but he *is* a shade less gloomy, and even for that slight amendment I am most thankful. How I do wish you were nearer. You and Mr. and Mrs. O—— A—— are among the very few of his more recent friends whose society he enjoys; and my delight in it you are not now to learn. Next summer I do hope that we shall meet. Perhaps before the spring is over I may revisit Wimpole Street; and then I shall try if I cannot compass my favourite wish by bringing you and my precious invalid together. My beloved friend suffered very much during the short early frost, but is now much better again. I hear from her two or three times a week: and such letters! Put Madame de Sevigné and Cowper together, and you can fancy them. I doubt, though, if ever the Frenchwoman wrote so frequently or so diffusely.*—She and I have been much puzzled by the impression which Miss Garrow's poetry has made upon certain very compe-

* Never was eulogy, high-strained though it may seem, more justified by facts, than this one. I can speak to it from experience, and cannot but wish that the letters in question should, under due editorship and supervision, be published.—C.

tent and usually very fastidious critics, Mr. Kenyon, Walter Savage Landor, &c. &c. You will find a long poem of hers in the last (recent) "Keepsake." Do look at it, just to confirm (for I know your taste well enough to believe that it will confirm) our opinion. There is an idiotic love—which seems to me the very last, in point of taste and feeling, that I should have liked a daughter of mine to portray—excited merely by a fine person, and not (as in the beautiful old tale of "Cymon") awakening the faculties and the affections—rousing both heart and mind. In the same "Keepsake" there is a delicious sonnet by Mr. Milnes, and a beautiful poem by John Kenyon, the gems of the volume. Miss G——'s poem reminded me of the "Ingoldsby Legends," without the fun and the marvellous trick of rhyming which made those strange freaks of fancy irresistible in their way. Talking of legends, I have just been reading a favourite book of my dear friend's, which she sent to me, "Stilling's Theory of Pneumatology," a most remarkable collection of ghost stories, dreams, &c., very interesting for its singular mixture of credulity, simplicity, shrewdness, and good faith. None but a German could have written it. She says that Stilling's "Autobiography"—which I have not read—is still more curious—"Herman and Dorothea" put into action. If you should meet with *that* in English, my dearest, I should be glad to read it, or Hayley's "Autobiography;" but I greatly fear that neither work is common. I am now very intimate with Miss Denman, Flaxman's sister-in-law and heiress; and she does not know where to look for the latter; and yet, you know, Flaxman and Hayley were bosom

friends. A thousand thanks for your kind offer respecting books. In general we can get any we wish at the excellent Reading library (Lovejoy's); he or I have all you mention, and most interesting they all are.

January 23rd, 1842.

I congratulate all, my dear young friend, from the bottom of my heart, upon an event so gratifying as dear Mr. A——'s assumption of the silk gown. I had heard before that he was speedily to be called to the Inner Bar, from our mutual friend Mr. D——; he added, "a perilous step for most men, but perfectly safe for *him*." The Chancellor's was a very graceful allusion. Let me follow up the illustration by an earnest wish that you and your dear mama may live to see your excellent father filling the post of commander-in-chief. No man can be fitter for the woolsack; and the wish, which seems so impossible in many cases, loses even its improbability in this. Keep the books and the leaves of the "Athenæum" as long as you like, my dearest. Mrs. G—— says of the Gregorian translations, that they are "Englished in words which in their point and richness are almost Greek;" and yet I had rather see more "Cloud Houses," and still rather a long, clear, unmystical narrative poem, full of picturesque description, of dramatic dialogue, and of human interest. Let her (Miss Barrett) once give the world such a work* as that, and she will not only sit on the very throne of

* Written long ere "Aurora Leigh" was began.—C.

poetry, but give an impulse to public taste at once elevating and purifying. Heaven be with you all. I could not help writing our poor congratulations.

February 23rd, 1842.

I cannot thank you enough, my ever dear and kind young friend, for your unfailing attention; but I write, even before reading Mr. Collyer's book, to tell you that your packet has arrived safely, and that I shall return *that* with many thanks, and avail myself of your goodness respecting Hayley's "Memoirs," of which I shall take the greatest possible care. Pray keep the "Minstrelsy" as long as you like. I love ballads, next I think, to the drama, in all the range of poetry; and, out of love to them, am now reading Lewis's "Memoirs"—the coadjutor of Scott in his early ballad poetry—modern ballads I mean—a very amusing book, which I find a good deal to select from for my father. Miss Barrett is busy with Madame D'Arblay. She says that Mrs. Thrale's charm seems to have been her quick sympathy both of heart and intellect. I *knew* that before; my old governess, Mrs. St. Quentin, having known her in Wales, and described that as her peculiar characteristic. Miss Barrett says that she is quite well (for her), and walks to the sofa—words of great hope for the summer. Oh, how kind it was of you to get Hayley! How can I enough thank you, my precious young friend? I shall tell Miss Barrett of it, and her love will help to pay you—will be gold added to my silver.

March 4th, 1842.

The enclosed scrap was written almost as soon as I had despatched my last note, and I hoped to have told you before now that I had taken Mr. Collier's "Memoirs," so kindly lent, and which I feel as so great and valuable a trust, safely to your fair friend (one can hardly make up one's mind to say aunt) at Farley Hill. But my father has been very ill again, with an attack of English cholera, and, his stomach once disordered, he is better one day and worse another. Then my poor pony has been, and still is, very ill of influenza. I believe that I shall lose him. In short, "there's nae luck about the house." My only real good fortune consists in kind friends—the best wealth, after all—surely the best earthly wealth; and of the many who are good to us, none are kinder or more valued than the dear family in Bedford Place. Be quite sure that your book is taken every care of, and that the moment I can get so far it shall travel to Farley Hill. I don't like to trust it to the postman. Do you see the "Athenæum?" I should suppose that any circulating library would lend it to subscribers. My reason for asking is, that dear Miss Barrett has published in the last number another article on the early Greek Christian poets, and will publish two more, which I should like you to see. The prose is quite as extraordinary as her poetry—so rich, and powerful, and brilliant. There is about it, too, the same vitality, the same allusion to out-door things—things of the day (Trafalgar Square and the Column to be therein erected), which, as your dear mama observed, with the fine sense of the relation of things for which her

observations are so frequently distinguished, holds forth a welcome hope of her own comparative recovery, at least of her prolonged life. She has gained strength, too, during this wretched winter, for she now walks to the sofa; and altogether I am hopeful as to her health. Is it not a remarkable instance of sympathy that she had just finished Lewis and Hayley, the memoirs of both? She enquires for a book which has often excited my curiosity, but which I never saw—the six volumes of Anna Seward's "Letters," published by Constable, to whom she bequeathed them.* I have read her "Memoirs of Dr. Darwin," and Sir Walter Scott's Life of herself; and I have her novel (a narrative poem) called "Louisa," with the Elegies on Captain Cook and Major André, on which her reputation as a poetess was founded. Would you like to see the book? If you would, I shall be delighted to send it to you. Scott's account of her is pleasing, and shows that she was more agreeable as a woman than as a poetess. Only think of her transcribing six volumes of her own letters! If I were to copy one of mine,† it would never go, so heartily ashamed should I be of its carelessness. It is only afterwards that a record of by-past thought and feeling becomes interesting.

This is the enclosed scrap referred to:—

I thank you heartily, my ever dear love, for the

* They were bequeathed to Sir Walter Scott—much to his literary distaste. Every one who came near the woman, liked her for her cordial generosity. But her writings, as works of art, are sad failures—reflecting all the autumn faults of a decaying literary time.—C.

† Yet Miss Mitford was willing to "prepare" her Letters to Sir W. Elford, for publication.—C.

perusal of the Collier "Memoir." It is very curious and interesting. I have taken the liberty of marking with a light pencil line that I especially like in the editor's part, which, indeed, is admirably filled throughout. I greatly, too, like the Diary; and the Letter to Sir Stephen Fox is very striking. In Richardson's curious correspondence (a book of which I have lost five volumes, having only one remaining), there is much about Miss Collier—or, I rather think, both the Miss Colliers. Once again I thank you very heartily for this among your many kindnesses. After finishing my last letter, I finished Lewis's "Memoirs." It is grievous to think how—by the publication of a book* that never ought to have been written or thought, far less printed—he stamped himself with an evil fame; for really he seems to have been one of the most benevolent, kind persons that ever lived. I think you would like his "Memoirs," and the "West Indian Journal." The ballad, "Bill Jones," of which Scott gave him the story, and which is versified in the plainest manner, and almost verbatim, is very striking. I remember, too, being much pleased, years ago, with the "Anacreon." Poor Lewis! I can't get him out of my head.—And yet the book is wretchedly done. It's the man's own character that forces itself upon one, in spite of the biographer; and the more strongly, of course, from the reaction—having before thought so ill of him. He died as early as Byron; and I am much more certain (humanly speaking) that he, if he had been spared, would have redeemed himself nobly, than I can feel about the other. There was in the one so

* "The Monk."

much self-denial and care for others;—precisely what "Childe Harold" wanted. Have you read "Two Years before the Mast?"* I am sure that you would like it: it is full of truth and goodness.

If you cannot procure the "Athenæum," I'll contrive to send you the numbers. The poetry in the last paper is quite worthless. It is our dear friend who turns all she touches into gold.

March 19th, 1842.

This very day, my dear young friend, have I despatched my little token of flower seeds and your "Memoirs of Collier" to Farley Hill, taking advantage of your kind permission to keep "Hayley" longer. I had hoped to have taken, not sent, my packet to the fair Emma; but my poor pony—I fear that I shall lose him! Except to-day, when a friend took me to see dear Lady Madalina Palmer—a most dear and most kind friend, whom I have not seen since last summer—I have not been further than my feet can carry me for weeks. We are, however, in rather better plight than when I wrote last, though, from being fairly overdone with anxiety and fatigue (for you can fancy nothing more trying to witness than those frightful fits), my old enemy nausea returned in full force; but that is gone again, and the fits, I trust, are gone; and my dear father is better in health, although the feebleness of limb remains, and the sad failing of eyesight. He cannot now even read the large leading article of a newspaper; and

* By Dana, an American author.—C.

although I do all I can to supply the deficiency, still it must be a great privation. I have written to ask dear Miss Barrett the exact title of the volume of Chaucer, edited by Mr. Horne. I have no doubt that the modernized Chaucer, with the editor's verse, would be sufficient; still, as my beloved friend has the book, she will, I am sure, send me the exact words of the title-page. Lewis's "Memoirs" were very badly done; but the letters, or rather the character of the man, as developed by his letters, struck me as so strongly contrasted with my previous notion of his qualities, that I was much pleased with it. But I have a love for biography—for that unconscious autobiography in which the character is developed by words and actions. I ever love long Books—*all* by which this diversified humanity is shown in its strange varieties, its curious mixture of good and evil. Therefore my strong preference of the "*Mémoires pour Servir*" over the "*Histoire*" concocted from them; and, therefore, anticipating all the conceit of Anna Seward's letters, all their mannerism and false criticism, I am curious to read them, as unintended confessions. However, at present, I am little likely to have the time, my dear father's want of sight, and his natural desire to follow the debates, and keep up with the news of the day, consuming nearly all my hours. Mr. Haydon has been delivering a lecture on Fresco. It is to be printed, and, when printed, sent to me. I have been almost looking at a revival of a lost art to-day. Lady Madalina's worsted-work being far more like the most exquisite painting—chiefly flowers and birds—than the trumpery which usually passes under

such a denomination. She can lay a flower upon the table, and copy it with the needle, as you would with the pencil; and the brilliancy and transparency of the tints is something to wonder at. I wished for you whilst looking at the chairs, and ottomans, and carpets. You, who love art in every branch, would have been delighted, I think, with this. It is such a luxury of colour, combined with so much grace and truth. Dear Mrs. O—— will, perhaps, have seen the death of our chief, Bertram Mitford, of Mitford. It was very sudden. He had been ill the day before; the next morning the physician visited him in bed, and felt his pulse. "Here," said the patient, "is the pain." "An excellent pulse," cried the physician, almost simultaneously—and at the very moment he fell back dead.* I am writing on Saturday, the 12th; but shall not close my letter until the title arrives.

I have just heard from Miss Barrett, who tells me that she shall send me the "Chaucer" for your use, which you may keep as long as you like, and that I shall transmit it to Miss Emma, at Farley Hill, as soon as it arrives (which will probably be to-morrow), and beg her to convey it to you when she goes to town. You can return with it the curious Ghost book, if, indeed, you have not, as is very probable, done so before.—You will be charmed with her

* "Mrs. N——," adds a postcript, "says that he died while feeling his own pulse."

version of a description of different marbles, in one of her late "Athenæum" articles.

In the short time that I can spare from my dear father, I am reading the book which I owe to your kindness, and which shall be safely returned to you —Hayley's "Memoirs"—and have been much interested by finding him making mention of becoming acquainted with the two sons of Lord Chatham (one of them the celebrated William Pitt) while residing at the house in Lyme, which we inhabited subsequently.

Some time has passed since the beginning of this letter; and this scrap will date itself by my saying that, in passing by some woodmen to-day, and stopping to look at the fine tree they had felled, the old man who was chopping off the boughs paused to enquire "if anything had been heard of the earthquake in London? He did not altogether believe it; but he had a daughter in service there, and should not be sorry when the day was over." Now that man *did* believe the prophecy.

April 10th, 1842.

Thanks upon thanks, mine own dear friend, for your charming letter—perfect in everything except in calling me "madam"—the only fault which I have yet been able to detect in my dear correspondent, and one most easily amended. Yes; I saw that beautiful "Curiosity Shop"* many years ago. I should greatly have enjoyed the seeing it again with you

* I suppose "Strawberry Hill."—C.

and your dear mama. The same post that brought your dear letter brought one from Miss Barrett, whose two sisters accompanied Mr. Kenyon and Mrs. Jameson to see the place, on Friday or Thursday, perhaps Thursday; and that same day brought yet another letter, from Miss S——, announcing the strong desire of the Queen and Prince Albert to visit the same attractive spot. Have they been there? I hope so. Nothing can tend more to ensure popularity than that her Majesty should partake the national amusements and the natural curiosity of the more cultivated part of her subjects. Marianne speaks with her usual praise of Prince Albert, and says that the Prince of Wales is, perhaps, the most beautiful baby in the kingdom. Her word is still stronger — "magnificent." The Princess Royal is delicate, but it is only teething. "A pretty little erect creature," are Marianne's expressions respecting her. I send the passage about dear Miss Barrett, by to-night's post, to herself, so that she will comprehend your visit exactly. I earnestly wish she were well enough to admit the hope of her seeing you. At present she remains exactly as before.

What a comfort it will be to me to see you again! Since your visit to Farley Hill, I have not left my father for so long, or half so long, in any one day, as the two happy visits I paid there. He is sadly out of spirits, and very feeble, and his eyesight fails him so much that I read to him during many, many hours of every day and all the evening; but his want of spirits renders it most difficult. During our cribbage-playing, my reading, my talking, he often moans for hours together. Mr. May comforts me by saying,

that there is more of habit than of suffering; but what a trial it is to bear, and how difficult to bear up with undiminished cheerfulness, I leave you to imagine. The entrance of the very, very few whom he likes to see—amongst whom are you and your dear family—of course breaks this painful current of thought, and controls its expression; but *that*, from his aversion to new friends, and the loss, by death or by absence (as in the case of dear Mr. and Mrs. D——) of the "old familiar faces," occurs very rarely. I hope, however, that when the summer comes, and he is able to get into the garden, that he may be soothed and cheered by the sunshine and the flowers, and that, when sitting in the air, in the midst of gardening operations, he will lose the perpetual attention to his own sensations which forms a great part of his present depression. Not a day passes now without his saying, and repeating perhaps a hundred times, that he has but very few days to live. Only yesterday he came into my room to take leave of it, and blessed me at night, "for," he said, "the last time." Oh, my dear love, how difficult it is to be cheerful when this is repeated, hour by hour and day by day, by the one dearest upon earth! Well, I will no longer sadden you with my secrets. Thank you again and again for Hayley's delightful book—delightful in spite of much mannerism, and some affectation. I have been reading also Miss Seward's "Letters," which dear Miss Barrett happened to possess, and, I confess, with strong interest, so does she. I want to meet with Hayley's "Life of Milton," his volume of tragedies (not "Marcella" and "Lord Russell," which I have in the six volumes of his Poems), his "Dia-

logues on Johnson and Chesterfield," and his "Essay on Old Maids." Doubtless they will turn up. Have I your leave to retain the "Autobiography" till we meet? Tell me if you want it quite frankly. I have been reading to my father (who knew her brother, Admiral Burney) the first volume of "Madame d'Arblay's Diary." It is very amusing, and never did Johnson appear so amiable. Mrs. Thrale, too, is charming in her vivid sympathies; but I confess that I dislike the writer. Dr. Burney's daughter, at twenty-seven, had no right to be so shy. To me, indeed, the timidity is all over-acting—a form, and a very bad form, of vanity.

May 4th, 1842.

I have had a great shock lately, in the death of poor Lady Sidmouth. I received from her two letters at once, on the Tuesday, accompanying a small portion of honey from Hymettus, which I sent, in right of Museship, to Miss Barrett; and on Friday I read her death in the newspaper. This honey from Hymettus is a fashionable gift of honour. I have had three little jars from different quarters. It resembles in taste the scent of a myrtle leaf, when bruised. Do you remember Mr. Ware's charming books, "Zenobia," and "The Last Days of Aurelian?" Finding that I liked them, he has had the goodness to send me the first, with a letter which you would like, it is so manly and candid, and full of unaffected pleasure in the appreciation of those whom he honours with his esteem. He appears to be one of

the professors of *their* Cambridge University. Professor Norton, of that University, poor Mrs. Hemans's friend and correspondent, is likewise mine. He sent me the works of Lucretia—no, Margaret—Davidson, and now promises me Stephens's "Central America," which I have a strong desire to see on account of the subject. Very anxiously, the day before, I had had a message from my friend Mr. Milton (Mrs. Trollope's brother), to say that he was now pretty nearly installed in poor Southey's post in the "Quarterly," and had written for that journal the excellent critique of the work in question, which you probably remember. Mr. Norton says that Mr. Dickens's reception in America was attended with certain absurdities sufficiently amusing; and Mr. Kenyon, on his part, tells me that Mr. D. is a matchless letter-writer, both for length and power, and that he and Mr. Milnes were setting forth, as yesterday, to listen to one of his epistles. In the meanwhile, let me thank you again and again for the delight that I have received from Hayley's "Autobiography." I have read it twice with redoubled pleasure, and shall probably read it a third time before restoring it to you here. When will that happiness arrive? Have I, all this time, fulfilled Miss Barrett's commission of thanking you for your charming note? She prayed me to do so. I had hoped she would have done it herself.

Your very interesting letter, my dear young friend, has remained long unanswered; but you know, probably, how anxiously that interval has passed with

me—that my beloved father has been at the very point of death, and most mercifully restored to me in a manner, considering the nature of the disease, and the age of the patient, as remarkable, perhaps, as any case recorded in the annals of surgery. Is not this wonderful at seventy-eight? Odd, too, that the power of motion is unimpaired, not a tendon or sinew being touched; that his intellect is clear as ever, and that he is restored to me in better health than before this attack. I almost believe that the having this constant object of forcing down nourishment kept me alive; for the mere watching and waiting, without being actively engaged in the cure would have killed me. I am sure it would.

Most mercifully, I have been able to go through it all. For a fortnight I never took off my clothes, or left him for half an hour; and hardly have I been an hour from him until now, for I read him to sleep every night, and go with him wherever he goes. He must get weaned a little from this most touching dependence upon me, for I must have time to earn the money to pay for this illness, the cost of which, in spite of everybody's kindness (and never were people so kind!) has been for us immense. I don't know how it happened that dear Miss C—— understood that I had gone to London—perhaps during the one drive that I took, for indispensable things, to Reading; for, except that once, I have never left him, and my occupation has been what can hardly be imagined, giving him all his food and medicine, sitting with him, waiting upon him, cooking for him, seeing people, answering notes (once, when I happened to count them, I reckoned thirty-eight in one

day), and, above all, fetching everything with my own hand, to endeavour to keep things a little together. But the kindness of people—of everybody—the poor, the farmers, the tradespeople, the gentry. Oh, my dear Miss A——, there is much, very much, of goodness in the world! Poor and powerless as he is, his truth and kindliness of character, his upright, straightforward manliness, have commanded a degree of respect and affection the most soothing and delightful to me, even in my bitter anxiety. Young and old, rich and poor, everybody came or wrote, sent all manner of things, offered wine, or help in any way. The house was besieged with enquiries; so was Mr. May's, in Reading; and when he first drove out, the carriage-doors were literally thronged with eager hands and joyful faces. It is a privilege to belong to one so much beloved, and deeply, dearly, do I feel it. Young surgeons, that did not attend him, came to sit up with me—an inexpressible comfort and kindness; and if I had room, I could tell you of fifty attentions to him—observe, for *his* dear sake—equally uncommon and sincere. I have left no room for your charming letter; but you, of all others, will pardon my being engrossed by my dear father; and engrossed I must be, to a point which will make me seem ungrateful, by the endeavour to earn money for his sake. My heart sinks sometimes, as I think upon all that I have to do (for now I read seven and eight hours a day aloud to him); but He who has spared him to me will, I humbly trust, strengthen me for the effort. I shall seem ungrateful, my dear young friend; but I shall not be really so. On the contrary, I shall be

very glad to receive your very charming letters. I saw Pope's house many years ago, and was delighted to see it again in your description. Poor Mrs. Maclean!* what a tragedy hers is! Have you seen Miss Barrett's fine stanzas on her death, in the "Athenæum?"—She is still at Torquay; I fear, little better. Although in the warmest house there, the windows pasted down with brown paper, she feels every blast of the east wind. Poor Mrs. Sullivan, too! She was Lady Dacre's only daughter, the writer of the Tales edited by her mother—a very fine woman of forty, and a very good woman. Lady Dacre loved her as Madame de Sevigné loved Madame de Grignan, and will feel her loss most bitterly; for she lived close by the Hoo, and never were mother and daughter more united. *You* will feel this also, my dear young friend, with a full comprehension of its deep and holy tenderness.

* "L. E. L."—C.

Letters to Mrs Partridge.

November 11th, 1842.

I have been too unwilling to sadden your present joyful hours to write to you at all; and now I only do so to say how affectionately, amidst my sorrows, I still think of you, and how brightly that one happy morning shines out amidst the surrounding gloom; a type, I earnestly hope, of your brighter and happier fortunes. At present my dear, dear father is conscious and composed—an indescribable comfort to me; for although his delirium was of a character unusually gentle and cheerful, it was yet most trying to me to find myself unrecognised,—to hear him asking for me and wondering where I could be, while I stood at his bedside! Now he knows me; and, what is more, he again feels the comfort of my reading to him and praying at his side with and for him. His mind is in the happiest frame of Christian hope and Christian charity. Mr. May has two or three times thought that the current week would terminate his existence; but the support that he continues to take sustains and will sustain him whilst he is able to receive it. I bless God that, although very nervous, I am mercifully supported to attend upon my dear father. I have been in no house but this since the happy hour when I last saw you.

Nothing can exceed the kindness that I have received from Mr. and Mrs. O—— A——. But you know what they are, and will not wonder what they have been to me, whose only merit is having loved their dear and sweet child.

May heaven bless you, my own dear friend! My poor father asked for you only to-day. "Have you heard from sweet Miss A—— ?—I forget her present name. Heaven bless her under any!" Those were his very words. I wrote at once, lest I should forget the very expression, thinking, feeling sure, that you would value such a benediction.

March 15th, 1843.

You did not answer my question respecting the dahlia roots. Do, if you think them worth the trouble of sending; for they shall be sent by the Watlington carrier on Saturday se'nnight; and I hope that they will turn out as good as those we had ourselves last year, which were really, on the whole, excellent. These are the best of one bed—of that very bed of seedlings which was last year, as a whole, so much admired; only, in consequence of my dear father's state of health, which prevented my attending to the matter myself, they were put by in disorder, so that there is no answering for the colours, nor even for the goodness, of such as may not have blown. Still, under all these disadvantages, I should myself think them well worth planting by any one who has plenty of room; and, indeed, my offering them to you is proof enough of that opinion,

since I would no more put a bad flower into your garden than I would into my own. Only just say one word, dear friend,—yes or no—and the roots shall be sent on or not, according to your desire.

What you tell me of your prospects of meeting Miss Harrison delights me. You are sure to like each other; and it will be amongst my highest pleasures to visit Buckinghamshire, and see together two of the most charming young women whom I have ever known—two whom I am proud to call my friends. You will like Mr. Harrison also. He is a lively, intelligent, agreeable man, full of good spirits and good humour. I should think that Mr. P—— must like one whom in many respects he so much resembles. Oh, how glad I shall be to see you all together and to increase my acquaintance with one whom, as your husband, I venture to reckon among my friends.

I have been very poorly, but am getting better, and reckon much upon my journey to Bath and into Devonshire. Did I tell you that I hope to meet Mrs. Trollope there, and that I have promised (D.V.) in some future year to visit her in Paris? One can hardly fancy a more agreeable introduction to the things and people best worth seeing in Paris, than Mrs. Trollope. What a pleasure it would be if we should happen to be there together! As it is I shall think of you in my Devonshire journey. Where was Sir Walter Raleigh's native house?—I mean, near what place? and what are the spots you most recommend to my notice? Did you visit Ilfracombe and Linton? I am going there with my friend Mrs. Chichester, of Arlington, near Barnstaple. I am

going to the Rev. Dr. Rudge, of Hawkhurst, near Axminster, chaplain to the late Duke of Kent, a most accomplished man, who had, I believe, something to do with the great kindness of the Queen Dowager. You will be glad to hear that I heard on Sunday of 75*l.* of fresh subscriptions, part from the Archbishop of Dublin and Lord Northampton, and part collected by my kind old friend, Mrs. Opie.

March 21st, 1843.

Tennyson is the only poet by whom Moxon says he has gained—or, rather, by whom he has not lost; and most certainly some of his poems (he is mannered and unequal, and full of faults) are of matchless beauty. I prefer him to any poet of the age. The "Lays of Rome," too, which are like the sound of a trumpet,—both are books to possess. A—— N—— has made very fine copies of some of the curious engravings. Mexico has always had a strange charm for me; and we know so little of that transatlantic Venice—and I have such a horror of Cortez and his fellow murderers.

Did you ever see Dr. Reid's two novels on the Conquest? They are very curious and interesting. Of course you know Madame D'Arblay's "Diary?" Otherwise *that* book is very curious; and I can give you a key to the people of the court—or, rather, I could have given it; for, with my horrible want of memory for names, I have doubtless forgotten many. Only, Mr. Fairly was Mr. Digby, and Miss Fusilier

Miss Gunning, the maid of honour.* Heaven bless you, dear friend! I have been very poorly, but am better again.

June 19th, 1843.

I am just long enough returned from London to have got over a little of its pleasant fatigue, and hasten to say that amongst my happiest moments there I reckon a visit in Bedford Place, where I saw your old abode and the pictures all belonging to you with feelings of the deepest interest. Dear Mrs. A—— was most kind in inviting me to dine with her, but I was overdone with engagements. I am really afraid to say how many invitations I left behind me—the result of going to town so seldom, and staying so short a time. I saw many things and people that you would have enjoyed—Mrs. Sartoris's singing in a private room—Mr. Lucas's exquisite pictures (do go and see them), and H—— C——† reading to me a play which, if sent in, would have saved Mr. Webster 500*l.* and Mrs. Gore some mortification — amongst the best worth seeking. Mrs. Gore I also met one day at dinner—she is just as worldly as her books. The dark room in Wimpole Street was a great contrast to these scenes. Oh, how I more and more love to admire its sweet and precious inmate! There is nothing like her in this world—that is certain. Tell dear Mrs. A—— that I attacked Mr. Barrett on the

* "Mr. Turbulent" was the Rev. Charles W. Giffardiere.—C.

† The Editor.

subject of getting her out of town; and having left Mr. Kenyon to follow up the blow, I have great hopes that a change may be effected. Her book (in two vols.) is still printing. It will place her more and more in the situation of Wordsworth forty years ago—the foundress of a school of enthusiastic worshippers—laughed at by those who do not feel high poetry. Poor Hood is dying. If you can get his Magazine do read a poem called the "Haunted House"—finer than Tennyson's "Mariana," in the same way—quite a contrast to that other great lyric, the "Song of the Shirt." He will be a real loss—not to comic writing, but to high and true poetry, few as his serious poems are. Of course you have seen his "Eugene Aram," and the "Retrospective Review?"

Now to my own plans. They are most uncertain. If I can get for W. Harness a horse and chaise with light duty near here (I am trying for Arborfield), during his three months of vacation, I shall of course stay at home. If not, I think of going abroad, having great hopes that H—— C—— will go with me to Paris, after which I am to meet a friend (the widow of a French gentleman) at Tours. There is a third case—that I may be compelled to stay by garden troubles. All this is so completely just now in the clouds, that I hardly venture to hope—or to wish—indeed I think I rather prefer the chance of my earliest friend, William Harness, this dear brother here, to anything else.

June 22nd, 1843.

I have had a sweet letter from dear Miss Harrison, dearest Mrs. P——, and I cannot help writing to tell you that which I am sure you will readily believe, that there is no love lost between you. She, like you, regrets only the nine miles' distance; but where liking is—liking which I hope and believe will grow into friendship—I cannot but think that the distance will prove less an obstacle than it seems now. After all, when once in a carriage, it matters little whether the drive is for four miles or nine. I do hope that you will become friends. I, for my part, am beginning to think little of distances, having found myself grown so good a walker that I am positively uncomfortable if I do not trudge some eight or ten miles a day; and when you come to Farley Hill (for come I trust you will), I shall make nothing of running backward and forward to see you. My present occupation is looking over Reading for cheap, pretty crockeryware—a little dinner service, and breakfast and tea, and dessert to match. Whether I shall succeed in my search I can't tell. I begin to fear not; but *that* is the way I have been making my poor cabin neat and clean, and light and bright, picking up cheap materials in carpets, chintzes, &c., and then making them up myself. We (K. and T.) have carpeted every room in the house by the work of our own fingers, and have just completed our sofa and chair covers, our muslin curtains and blinds, and a new dimity bed, which was just completed in time for a certain Miss ——, a self-invited guest, who is the finest specimen of Hibernian brass that I have

ever seen in my life. You'll laugh when I tell you about her.

* * * *

I do hope that I shall soon see you. You must let me know when you come to Mr. A——'s, and you must come and see me and my poor cottage while it keeps its freshness. I am expecting a very different visitor from my Irish lady, a Bath poet, Mr. Reade, whose "Italy" has much grace and beauty, and whose manners and character are full of a delightful frankness, intelligence, and sympathy. He is a very delightful person. My beloved Miss Barrett often asks me after you.

* * * *

Have you seen Mr. Horne's "Orion," an epic, price one farthing, or nothing, a set?

January 12th, 1844.

Have you seen some stanzas by Thomas Hood called the "Song of the Shirt?" I hold in great aversion his comic writings, which are, for the most part, so far-fetched and laboured that it is a real fatigue to read them; but occasionally he has a vein of the truest pathos, and this homely song seems to me one of the most touching series of stanzas ever written—a proof how far more powerful, plain, naked simplicity is than all the ornament in the world without it—one touch of nature makes the whole world kin. Do read this homely lyric.

Three Mile Cross, July 29th, 1844.

I write by my friend, Miss S——, who has been here—that is, at Reading—for a month past, with a lady who comes every year there to be near me. She is a great painter of wild flowers—illuminates beautifully, and is, I really think, one whom you would like—so like Madame de Staël to look at that it seems wonderful—and altogether one whom, for her own sake and mine, I am sure you would like.

July 25th, 1845.

I did not need your charming letter to revive my strong desire for a renewed and prolonged intercourse with one whom I so much love and admire, but I am terribly afraid that that great pleasure must be postponed till next summer; then (D.V.) it *shall* take place. This is what has happened—Mr. Horne wrote me word that he would come here the end of June or the beginning of July. Mrs. —— wrote word that she would come at the same time to introduce to me a Miss ——, a poetess of no mean order. Miss J——, my oldest friend, wrote that she would come at the same time—all to lodge close by, and come to me in the evening—all to stay some weeks. This has happened for two years (Miss S—— last year being the substitute of Miss S——), with general satisfaction, as, indeed, they are very accomplished persons, and Mr. Horne's music is an attraction to the families round. But this year all has gone wrong on the great point of time. Mr.

Horne, here for ten days, and just gone, comes next week for ten days longer. Mrs. D—— has been compelled to go into Wales, to let her own fine place, and will return here just in time to miss Mr. Horne; and Miss J——, who is in Paris, seems likely to arrive just soon enough to replace Mrs. D——. Both make circuits to come to me, and are old and dear friends—and I do not see that I can very well send them off this year, but another time it shall not happen. They must come together, or I cannot be bound to stay at home for them. Will you let dear Miss Harrison know this? I shall write to her in a very short time. I am so sorry not to see her also. There are very few persons whom I so much love and admire. Next year, please God, I will come and enjoy your society. I shall not mind the distance if the weather be not very hot.

At present I am buried in memoirs. Have you ever read the works of Paul Louis Courier? They, in a very different way (something between Sydney Smith's Pamphlets and "Les Lettres Provinciales"), are almost equally fine. Do read them. I have a MS. to look over by Mr. Spencer Hall, the Mesmeric lecturer—not a work on Mesmerism, but on Sherwood Forest—in a part of which he was born. He is the very type of a peasant poet—not Burns, of course, but Bloomfield and Clare—and in this book, which is prose, the poet's heart and the poet's eye break forth in every sentence. It will interest you much, especially some passages of autobiography relating to his first struggles after knowledge in Nottingham. Also I have been much interested by Samuel Bamford's writings (a weaver)

—both his poems and his "Life of a Radical." And I have had a very interesting American visitor, Miss Cushman, the tragic actress—a very superior woman. They say she is an actress of great genius.

July 3rd, 1846.

Your letter, my very dear friend, increases my remorse; but I was so excited and so unwell on Friday morning, that the getting wet in a thunder shower, which in general I do not mind, and the being told by everybody that the wet would continue—which usually stimulates me to go on—completely cowed me. The fact, I believe, was that I had been completely upset by the terrible shock of poor Haydon's death. He was a friend of five-and-thirty years or more; has sometimes written me three or four letters in a week; and was so brilliant, so animated, so full of life, so young in mind and manner, that the death itself, set aside the frightful manner of it, had something that took me by surprise—like the death of a young bride. Now people will remember that at that same five-and-thirty years ago, when my old friend Sir William Elford gave seven hundred guineas (I had thought it six hundred, but Miss Elford tells me seven hundred) for his "Judgment of Solomon," he was considered the most promising artist of England; that although he never quite kept that promise, he yet gave a great impulse and impetus to art; that he was a man of high accomplishment; that the two Landseers, Eastlake, and Lance were his pupils; and that he was an

excellent husband, exçellent father, excellent friend! I am certain that he calculated upon the interest which this deplorable event would excite for his wife and family, and that that feeling, mingled with the weariness of a long, hopeless struggle, in prompting him to this fatal act. His wife was a most beautiful woman. She quite realised the beauty of the Rebecca of "Ivanhoe." Sir Robert has behaved very nobly; so he did to Mrs. Hemans, to whom he sent one hundred pounds from himself, and an appointment in a public office for her son. I am told that few events of our times have made so great a sensation as this tragedy of real life. The last time I heard from Haydon was to enclose a ticket for the private view of his last unfortunate picture. It was addressed—as he always directed to me—to Mary Russell Mitford. Ah! dearest friend, the "writing women" of whom I was thinking are very different from you. Those who make a trade of literature, who, for the most part, without any sort of real talent, force themselves upon the public, and are as vain-glorious and as self-occupied as Joanna Baillie and Elizabeth Barrett are *not*—such women as Miss Pardoe, for example. At the same time I confess that, for a friend's own happiness, I would never persuade her into writing. It is not a healthy occupation. I always detested it; and nothing but the not being able to earn the money wanted by my parents in any other way could have reconciled me to the perpetual labour, the feverish anxieties the miserable notoriety of such a career. I have said this to a hundred aspirants. But, however, when there is really the impulse, the inspiration, why then

let it come! and in your case I am pretty sure that it will come gradually, in the shape of short, lyrical pieces on such subjects as suggest themselves naturally;—such poems as made the reputation of Mrs. Hemans, and as will be the real claim on posterity of Victor Hugo—"Les Chants du Crepuscule," "Les Orientales," and those other most cheering volumes will long be remembered, after the plays and the "Notre Dame" shall be forgotten.

You never even saw the puppies, who get more and more like their father. Do you or does Mr. Partridge wish for one? It is a famous sporting race, the real old English cocking spaniel; and my father refused twenty guineas for —— on account of his excellence in the field. Put him into a hedgerow and he never left it till the end. Unluckily, his offspring are all female. "Beaumont and Fletcher," the edition I spoke of, is published by Moxon; two volumes, in double columns, at 1*l.* 12*s.* Oh how you will enjoy that poetry! As to my own book, I don't know the title! But selections from Alexandre Dumas, edited by me, and published by Rolandi, Foreign Library, Berners Street, will, I suppose, get the work. It is to be very cheap.

July 9th, 1846.

Whenever you like to have H——'s pretty little daughter she will be ready for you, though being only a month old last Saturday she can hardly yet travel alone. They are the forwardest puppies ever known—their mother having abandoned them,

and they at their early days eating and sleeping without her, cuddled up together. I only hope she may be to you the comfort her dear father and brother have been to Miss Barrett and me. Ah, my dearest, I am afraid to accept the honour you design me, because until I have fulfilled my engagements to Mr. Colburn and Messrs. Grant and Griffiths, I cannot undertake anything that shall place my name in the title-page of an English work (I am afraid of thinking of what they will say to the French affairs, little as that can interfere with them); and if the Dumas' answers Mr. Rolandi, and I have in prospect three or four other volumes—which of course will postpone the English engagements — so that your book, in waiting for me, might be adjourned indefinitely. All this is for you to consider—the first thing being to finish it. Ah, by short poems I did not mean Scandinavian ballads, or any planned work, but such as you find yourself impelled to write at the moment—by any scenery—any feeling —any event. They are the poems that live—that go home to other hearts—because they spring from our own. Only look at the difference between those sort of poems in Elizabeth Barrett's and Victor Hugo's volumes, compared with their dramas, and you will understand what I mean. It is the true test of a poetical temperament—and that you possess such an one I am sure. Poor Mr. Haydon has left his, consisting of twenty-six large volumes of Diary, to Elizabeth Barrett.

July 14th, 1846.

I set off before twelve o'clock, and have just come home wet through; and although it seems now something finer, yet all the weatherwise people foretell more showers; so that, with great reluctance, I am compelled to give up a visit on which I had so much depended. Nothing can be so unlucky. I took shelter at a cottage, and then got on about a mile and a half on my way, and was at last compelled to return by a storm driving right in my face. It is only on these occasions that I feel the want of a vehicle. I cannot tell you how much I lament this *contre-temps*. If I had not set off so soon (for me) it would have been better. But now I am done up, as well as the fear of the weather (for it is a thundery atmosphere, and very exhausting). Another time I do hope to be more fortunate.

(Enclosed in same envelope as last letter.)

You must not think my refusal unkind, my very dear friend. It is the result of my peculiar situation. I had just before my father's last illness engaged for two works—one a novel, the other a tale for young people, to be completed when the novel was brought out—and having been prevented by different circumstances from fulfilling these engagements, am *dunned* oftener than you can tell by the angry booksellers. I was even frightened to undertake the Dumas book on that account; but that is so totally different a matter, and will be so little, if at all, advertised in the English

papers that, as Mr. Rolandi says, we run no risk—but in putting my name in the title-page of an English work I should bring down on myself, and probably on the innocent work in question, such a shower of indignation as would overwhelm us both. This is my reason. Moreover, I believe that the system is a bad one. The best reviewers have got into the habit of calling it a trick; and I am confident that it never does good, and may do harm. I have refused twenty times at least; but should certainly have yielded to your wishes had I not been situated as above, which I thought, my dear love, that I had before explained to you. Never dream that it could proceed from want of affection. As to the reviews and reviewers, I know none in the world, except Mr. C—— of the "Athenæum;" and they proclaim * loudly and proudly that they treat their friends worse than strangers, and their enemies best of all; so that one does harm in mentioning a book to them. The booksellers will send the work properly about, and then it must take its chance and make its own way. *That* was always my course. I never knew a reviewer or coveted a review in my life, and, in point of fact, very seldom saw any. There may be a system of management—and I believe is—but I am quite ignorant of it, and, living in the country, have no means of getting at it—which in my own case I would not do if I could. It turns out to be a mistake

* A misstatement. I believe that no journal was ever less talked about by its proprietors and contributors than the one in question:—hence an amount of error in imputation, which not seldom amounted to the ridiculous.—C.

about the "Papers" being left to Miss Barrett; they are under her care, which led to the misconception, and the poor thing had a sound fright for nothing. I take it that they will be very interesting—not so much about art, but about poetry and literature, and the world in general, poor Haydon having been the friend of almost every eminent man for the last forty years; but he was so keen and close an observer, and so frank and bold a writer, that the publication of the "Memoirs" will be terribly dangerous, and would have killed Elizabeth Barrett. Keep the "Beaumarchais" as long as you like. I was only afraid that it was in less safe hands. I am more likely to want "Le Père Goriot" if we do other volumes of French Extracts—but not in haste. We shall do Victor Hugo and Eugène Sue first. And now, dearest, good-bye. I have ten letters to answer to-day. How can I write books!

I have asked Miss —— to forward to you a copy of a letter which Miss Barrett wrote to me on poor Mr. Haydon's death.

August 28th, 1846.

I was indeed delighted and interested, dearest friend, by your charming account of dear Miss Harrison's wedding. (Ah me! it will be a full twelvemonth before I shall call her by her new name! It always does take that time to reconcile me to the change in one whom I love.) The result seems to me to contain a great promise of happiness. She is

full of health and animation, and will bear along her new family by the mere force of her own good spirits —animal spirits, as they are partly called, have a wonderful effect, an effect far greater than is generally thought on our destinies. You remember what Hamlet says to Horatio in that play which is the very essence of wisdom: "I am quite sure that, in my own case, my good spirits kept me alive"— and now, poor and old, and sickly, they make me happy. It is the one great blessing, next to my kind dear friends, of my lot. What then must it be to our dear friend with whom all is sunshine, and who has this great gift of God to enhance His other great blessings! So far as we poor mortals can see our way in this world of change, she will be a happy woman, without reference to mere worldly prosperity. God grant it, for she is a sweet, affectionate creature, with a large mind and a fine intelligence; born to contribute to the felicity and the virtue of all that surround her. Also, my beloved friend, I have a general good opinion of the people among whom her lot and yours is cast. I have a nice lad from Dinton proper; my dear and good Mrs. M—— comes from near Aylesbury, and Maria grows in my favour day by day. It was your own instinct of goodness, my dear love, that led you to choose her for me. She desires me to beg you to tell her people that she is well and happy, and I hope and believe that she is so, that she has got a little puppy who is her great pet (the brother of *your* young lady, whom I keep as heir apparent to dear old Flush), and that she walks about with me all over the neighbourhood, and lives in hopes of going next

year either to London or Paris. Her naïveté is delicious, she gets prettier and prettier; and without losing her little rustic grace is becoming easy, and knows what to say and do. *Your* puppy is a pretty little thing, much smaller than mine, but strong and intelligent, and the picture of her papa. She is quite clean in her ways, and very fondling. We had a great fright last Sunday night, or rather the night between Saturday and Sunday, our cottage being attempted. If Mr. P—— had been here, *he*, I do believe, would have traced the thieves, so I am sure would my dear father; but here is no resident magistrate, so we are left to our own resources. I rang two bells for five minutes or more and we called and screamed with might and main, so that the villains finding us on the alert took themselves off.

* * * * *

The thieves forced away a shutter, and cut with a diamond a hole for the hand in a pane of glass. What a year for weddings! Do you know your new cousin elect? and do you like him? Read when you can, "La Mare au Diable" and "Fanchette"—one of George Sand's proper books, and most charming. She is a very great woman.

December 6th, 1846.

I do indeed sympathise deeply with you all, my dearest friend, on the death of your venerable and excellent relative. It has brought back to me vividly my own feelings four years ago, when I lost

my own dear father. They were nearly of the same years, and in a different way equally remarkable specimens of a green old age. Will you, when you write to your own dear father and to Miss A——, convey my respectful sentiments of condolence and sympathy. I suppose that the pictures will be sold—but, I hope, not dispersed. Surely the Trustees of the National Gallery ought to be too happy to find a collection so admirably chosen; and it would be very gratifying to your family to find your name—their name I should have said—so honourably connected with one of our great public monuments. I suppose, after all, that this will depend chiefly upon the money which the Government (so often stingy when it ought to be liberal) thinks itself justified in spending on such an object. I hope that we shall not lose dear Mrs. A—— from the neighbourhood—though I fear that now I can hardly hope to see you this Christmas as I used to do. We must have *the* railroad, dear friend, and then we can get backward and forward to see one another. Thank you, dear love, for your account of the Disraelis, which is very interesting. I suppose that, next to Mr. Rogers, Mr. Disraeli is the oldest writer of eminence living. Thank you still more for what you tell me of sweet Mrs. Acton Tindal.

January 27th, 1847.

A thousand thanks, dearest Mrs. P——, for the most kind and welcome present which you announce.

I do not wait for its arrival to write and thank you. No, I am not going to town yet. I would go on purpose to see you if the days were not so short, and the road so dirty. It took me two hours and a half last Saturday to walk back from Reading; the three miles and a half which, in dry weather, Maria and I manage in an hour. I do hope to be in London in May or June; perhaps the last week of the one, and the first of the other, or the two first weeks of June. Shall you be in town then? Pray say yes. Have you ever read an Oxford Graduate's "Letters on Art?" The author, Mr. Ruskin, was here last week, and is certainly the most charming person that I have ever known. The books are very beautiful, although I do not agree in all the opinions; but the young man himself is just what if one had a son one should have dreamt of his turning out, in mind, manner, conversation, everything. I quite longed for you to hear and admire him. I enclose some verses which have, I think, great truth and beauty. *That* poet will be heard of when he has bided his time. Say everything for me to dear Mr. and Mrs. A——, and Mr. Partridge. Thank you once again, my dearest friend.

TO A LOCKET.

Oh! casket of dear fancies—
Oh! little case of gold,
What rarest wealth of memories
Thy tiny round will hold;
With this first curl of baby's
In thy small charge will live
All thoughts, that all her little life
To memory can give.

Oh! prize its silken softness
  Within its amber round,
What worlds of sweet rememberings
  Will still by us be found;
The weak, shrill cry, so blessing
  The curtained-room of pain,
With every since-felt feeling
  To us 'twill bring again.

'Twill mind us of her lying
  In rest, soft-pillowed deep;
While, hands the candle shading,
  We stole upon her sleep.
Of many a blessed moment,
  Her little rest above,
We hung in marvelling stillness—
  In ecstacy of love.

'Twill mind us, radiant sunshine,
  For all our shadowed days;
Of all her baby wonderings,
  Of all her little ways,
Of all her tiny shoutings,
  Of all her starts and fears,
And sudden mirths out-gleaming
  Through eyes yet hung with tears.

There's not a care—a watching—
  A hope—a laugh—a fear,
Of all her little bringing,
  But we shall find it here.
Then tiny golden warder,
  Oh! safely ever hold
This glossy, silken memory,—
  This little curl of gold.

Greenwich. W. C. BENNETT.

July 26th, 1847.

Your sweet letter, my precious love, gave me singular pleasure. Be sure that I wish quite as much as you do, for a frequent and unrestricted intercourse with one whom I love so dearly, and admire so greatly; and if it please God to spare me for a few years, I cannot but believe that it will happen. In the meanwhile, do stay as long you can here when you drive to Weymouth. We are in the direct road from Reading to Basingstoke. Make your stop *here*. I have now a person who can cook a chicken and a pudding very nicely; and tell Mr. P—— that I entreat him to take an early dinner here. It will give no sort of trouble, and more pleasure than I can well tell; certainly to me, and I think to both of us. There is so much of communication that can only pass from lip to lip, that I earnestly long for a continued talk with you face to face. I am still very lame, walking two or three miles with more difficulty, and more fatigue, and in a longer time than I used to walk ten or twelve; but except this (and the great discomfort of having no conveyance), the summer has passed very pleasantly. Mr. Boner, my very favourite friend, and Andersen's best translator, has been in England, and much here. He sent me the other day for dear Patty Lovejoy's album (she is a sweet little girl of eleven years old) an autograph of Spohr's, and one of Andersen's, and the latter is so pretty that I must transcribe it for you. He (Andersen) is the lion of London this year—dukes, princes, and ministers are all disputing for an hour of his company; and Mr. Boner says that he is perfectly unspoilt, as

simple as a child, and with as much poetry in his every-day doings as in his prose. This is his autograph:—

"How blue are the mountains! How blue the sea and the sky! It is the expression of love in three different languages."

H. C. ANDERSEN.

London, July 16th, 1847.

Mr. Bennett has been here for two days, and won all hearts. He is very young, a true poet of the people. I think I have sent you some of his beautiful verses; but at all events I will enclose one or two more, and last not least. Mr. Ruskin has been here two or three times, and is coming again for a longer time. He is, you know, the famous Oxford Graduate—and by very far the most eloquent and interesting young man that I have ever seen—grace itself and sweetness; of course you know his book. Without assuming the truth of his heresies (and, indeed, I know too little of the subject to venture an opinion), there are passages in "The Modern Painters," that Hooker or Jeremy Taylor might be glad to have written. Then I have seen Mrs. Archer Clive, who is also a great friend of mine. She sent me the other day her poem, "The Queen's Ball," of which the subject is most striking; one hundred and fifty persons were invited who are dead. She has made a fine use of this remarkable fact. I forgot to tell you that I had also seen much of George R——, who will certainly be, if not a John Foster, a Robert Hall! Ah, I knew you would delight in John Foster! His humility, his independence, his

truth, his piety, I know hardly any character I admire so much, except perhaps Gerald Griffin, who, an Irishman, a Catholic, and a poet, seems to have had many of the same fine qualities. Do get "The Ballads of Ireland," edited by Gavan Duffy, and "The Songs of Ireland," forming part of the series of Duffy's "Irish Library." They are only a shilling each, and will give you specimens of his delicious poetry; but be particular in the titles, for there are other volumes something like them, but of inferior merit. To fully appreciate Balzac, you should read the great series of "Les Illusions Perdues,"—first *that*, —then "Un Grande Homme de Province à Paris," then "David Sechard," then "Esther," then "Une Instruction Criminelle." But perhaps the two first will be enough. I am now reading Lamartine's "Histoire des Girondins," which I like much better than his poetry, although I do not quite go along with all his opinions. It is quite worth reading, as indeed the French histories all are; of course, you know "Thiers's" and "Thierry's;" and in some of Michelet's works on old French history there is a wonderful power of picture. Adieu, dearest friend. Make my affectionate love to dear Mrs. Acton Tindal, whom matrimony has really inspired. She writes better and better every day.

August 7th, 1847.

I am sorry to say, my very dear friend, that I have no new French books, except those you have had, and a small edition of "Béranger," certainly

the greatest living poet, which I am often wanting, so that you could perhaps contrive to let me have that again soon. You will find a great many *Chansons,* which you will detect at once and leave unread; but the others are exquisite, so is the preface. I have no new books, but I have a very rich collection of the old "French Drama," all "Molière" (certainly the next greatest dramatist to Shakespeare), all "Corneille," "Racine," "Voltaire," "Crebillon" and "Regnard." I have also Vertot's "Revolutions," Voltaire's "Charles XII.," "Louis XIV." and "Louis XV.;" and four volumes called "Bibliothèque Portative," which corresponds to our "Elegant Extracts." The "Plays," and Voltaire's "Histories," are little unbound, cheap volumes; "Vertot," and the "Bibliothèque," are expensively bound, nor need I tell you that any or all of these are at your service. The only difficulty with me is the getting them to the railroad, and having no conveyance, or horse, or man-servant at present, and finding the coaches unsafe. I can get them into Reading on Tuesday and Friday; but even in sending my own books to Rolandi's, I am obliged to have recourse to my dear friend, Mr. Lovejoy, and so I must now. Nobody certainly ever had such a friend as he is to me, and all his servants and people are as kind as he himself. Mr. Harness and Mr. Dyce were with me a long day last week, and were delightful. They tell me that Wordsworth's "Ode," was really extorted from the poor old man, written in four hours, and printed against his will. William Harness had been dining with the heroine of "Locksley Hall" and her husband. His new poem

is a "Commonwealth of Women."—A man gets in, and you can imagine the *dénouement*. It is said to be very beautiful, but not favourable to female intellect or character. Cottle has reprinted his book on Coleridge, with several letters of Southey's added, which letters are of tremendous severity as regards Coleridge;—whom Southey calls a man disregardful of all his duties, leaving his wife and children to be supported by chance, and shockingly ungrateful to Wordsworth and himself. Be sure, my very dear love, that I shall be enchanted to see you in November; and if you could stay only ten minutes longer by dining or lunching here, I must entreat you to do so. It can be managed without the slightest trouble, and I really long to see you. The Reading election was a great triumph for Mr. Pigott, (you must have seen him at Farley Hill). He got in upon Liberal principles, and his own personal popularity, without a paid canvasser, a paid clerk, a paid attorney, a threat or a bribe; and dragged Mr. Serjeant Talfourd in after him—a most mortifying sort of success.

August 31st, 1847.

I was going to write to you last night, dearest friend, when somebody came in; and now I seize the opportunity of a storm that keeps me from church (oh! I fear it will only be a passing shower, and not give us the real wet we so much want); but I seize this moment of leisure and solitude to say how very glad I always am to hear of one whom I have loved

so long, and love so dearly as yourself. Mrs. Acton Tindal is coming here some day—soon, I hope ;—she and her husband are to drive here one day as early as they can, sleep at Reading, and return the next morning home. How I wish you could manage to come some time or other in the same way—only staying a little longer. When she comes I will send you Béranger. Shall I add Molière? He was the greatest poet of the drama, out of Shakspeare. Some of the French critics use the words "*le sublime* Molière" constantly in speaking of him, which seems strange to our ears, accustomed to think of him as a great writer of comedy, but is true as applied to the extent of his power and the wonderful knowledge of human nature that he exhibits. There is so much under the laughter. I could send you Corneille, and Regnard, and "Le Théâtre de Voltaire" also, if you like, and Crebillon. It will be a huge packet—but these complete editions of dramatic writers are interesting to me. I am reading Lamartine's "Histoire des Girondins," in eight volumes—very interesting indeed—between History and Memoirs. The Queen is reading it also, M—— S—— says, and it must be curious to see the sort of shuddering sympathy — the fellow-feeling that makes us so kind—that must seize any Queen, however fortunate and popular, in dwelling upon the sufferings and infinite humiliations of the fairest and proudest of her order. I rejoice to hear of Mr. Disraeli's continued clearness of intellect. His "Curiosities of Literature" was among the most valued books of my girlhood, and one of those which most I think induced me to love reading as I have done and

do. A very clever and charming young American who was here yesterday (the handsomest man, by-the-way, that I ever saw in my life) tells me that Mr. Prescott's eyes are wonderfully better;—that he is established in a new house, and happier than he ever knew him. Have you read his "Peru?"—less interesting, I think, than the "Mexico," but still a fine book. I see from "La Galérie," that Armand Carrel was one of Thierry's assistants in his "Conquest of England by the Normans." Of course you know Thierry's histories—the most picturesque ever written—his eyes being as defective as Prescott's.—Yes, I have read Jeffrey. Of course Moore took the notion from that book — hardly worth the stealing. Poor Mr. Moore! Alfred Tennyson's poem is printing. It is long; and my friend Mr. Dyce (a man of consummate taste) says that it is beautiful, but that it gives a low idea of women. He is a great torment to Mr. Moxon, keeping proofs a fortnight to alter, and then sending for revises. You know Balzac always throws off part of the money he receives for his exquisite prose to defray the immense expense caused by his almost constantly re-writing his works on the proofs. To anybody who has read the hundred and odd volumes of Balzac, this continued labour on style appears as admirable as it is rare. Our *prosateurs* don't care what stuff they send into the world.

October 29th, 1847.

I was just thinking of writing to you when your most kind letter arrived, my very dear friend, to tell you that I had promised dear Mrs. Acton Tindal to spend a week next summer at Aylesbury—she is to take me a room—and (being so lame that a pony-chaise has become a necessity) I shall drive in my own little equipage, and my dear old servant K., who is now back with me, to my indescribable comfort, being an excellent whip. This will enable me to spend some hours during two or three days at Horsenden. I had not thought of that method of proceeding when our dear friend was here; but I wrote to her at once to explain it, and you will see at once how much freedom it will give to our intercourse. I *have* the pony, and am looking about for the little chaise — something very light and cheap, of course — and the drive from Aylesbury to you will be nothing. Is not this a nice plan? Some time in August is what I think of, when days are still long, and your delicious turf (Mrs. Tindal says there is nothing like it), your water, and your foliage will be all in full glory. Did I ever tell you with how much interest I read Mr. Howitt's account of the Leasowes in his "Homes and Haunts of the Poets"—and another account of it in the "First Impressions of England," by Hugh Miller, a Scottish geologist? You would be pleased with those accounts if they fell in your way; and I do think, from all I have picked up about your beautiful place, that it must resemble that far-famed abode of the old poet. Next summer (if it please God) I shall *know*. I cannot tell you how much

this scheme has pleased me. It unites the visit to two dear friends with the view of a charming and most interesting country. Are you not pleased with my plan? Thank you very much, dear friend, for your gardening bounties. If it will not be too troublesome to you, I shall be most thankful for the basket you mention, and *you* must bring me the seeds when you come after Christmas. Mind that *then* you are to take a day-ticket, and drive here, and spend as many hours as you can. It is what I used to do once a month to Elizabeth Barrett, and what many persons have done by me this summer — Mr. Harness, Mr. Dyce, Mr Boner (the friend and translator of Andersen)— and many others. Now that I have got K. a little dinner is no trouble. What I want of you is, to see as much of you as I can—as often as I can—and for as long a time. Mrs. Browning said in one or two of her letters that there was absolutely *no* modern Italian literature: that the only books since Ariosto, Tasso, &c., were translations from bad French novels. I can believe this, from the inferior quality of two or three modern books that one has known — Ugo Foscolo's books, and Mazzini's, which have been of a class that, if one met with in French, one should not finish. I myself know no book in Italian that I care for since Alfieri. This History, of Lamartine's, is worth all his poetry put together—for which, indeed, I have no very high value. Do read it. The French historians nowadays are very striking — Thierry especially: and I like Thiers and Michelet. You are right, I think, dear friend, about Frederick

Soulié—but he had an immense fertility and an invention which, after all, one could but admire. In "La Confession Générale" there is a passage—I mean a scene—so like the famous one in "Matilde," that certainly one must have been copied from the other—but which was the copyist I cannot tell. I mean the scene where Ursula conceals a love-letter by winding worsted upon it.—If you remember, in "Les Mystères de Paris" there is a striking resemblance in the preparations to conceal a suicide, between the goings on of the Marquis and the devices of Gammon, for the same purpose, in "Ten Thousand a Year,"—certainly the best bit of that odd book. But Mr. Warren is so inferior to Eugène Sue, that I set him down for the thief at once. I am not so sure in the other case. "La Confession Générale" is a book of much talent. Have not you seen any of dear Mrs. Acton Tindal's Ballads? Some of them are in "Jerrold's Magazine." They are very beautiful—vigorous, rich, and manly. Do get her to show you the "Infant Bridal," for instance—or almost any—for she writes with an evenness and an originality quite uncommon in so young a poetess. But I think that this has proceeded chiefly from her never forcing herself to write, but letting it come—for she is older in poetry than in years. This, you know, is my recipe, and certainly in her case it has been successful. Heaven bless you, dear love. This is a long gossip.

December 1st, 1847.

I thank you most sincerely, my very dear friend, for the beautiful brace of pheasants you have had the great kindness to send me. Thank Mr. P—— also, for his share of the benefaction. I have been bred up in the respect for sportsmen and field-sports, and sporting dogs, and even now I can hardly write for grief, having lost my dear old "Flush" this very evening. He died quite suddenly, and without suffering, which is a comfort; but his death makes me feel more lonely than you, my dear love, can feel or ever, I hope, will feel. He loved me so entirely, and I, as entirely as is compatible with our far more selfish human nature, loved him. Poor dear Flush! My poor father loved him so dearly that it is like losing a part also of him over again. I have been very poorly, but am getting better; and you will be glad to know that game is the only meat that I could touch. So that your pheasants will be not only a luxury, but a real benefit. I cannot be sorry for the cause of my not seeing you now, although I grieve so much at our not meeting. It seems to me that a child will be everything to you. God grant that all go right! Mr. Bennett has just got another daughter. Mrs. Browning and our dear Mrs. Acton Tindal, are expecting young poets, so that you and your compeers in talent are about, I trust, to be equally blest. Mr. P—— or dear Mrs. A——, will, I am sure, have the goodness to let me have one line; otherwise not seeing newspapers, I should not know when the happy occurrence took place. Did I recommend your reading Dumas's book on "Spain de Paris à Cadix?" If not, let me supply

the omission now. It is charming; full of *verve*, as all his travels are. The description of a bull-fight, and of Granada, are in his very best style. As an English book, you will, I think, be much pleased with Mr. Helps's "Friends in Council."

December 18th, 1847.

"La Mare au Diable," "Les Maîtres Mosaistes," "Le Peché de M. Antoine," "Lucrezia Floriani," "Valentine," "Mauprat,"—these are all by George Sand, my dear friend, and all more or less distinguished by her great merits. "La Mare au Diable" is a most beautiful little story, which anybody might have written—that could. "Valentine" has still more beauty; but is full of abominations. The "Lucrezia" always seemed to me, I don't know how truly, to be meant for a delineation of her own character. They are all worth reading, not only for the delicious French, but for a certain beauty that one finds nowhere else. Do you know the great series of "Les Illusions Perdues," by Balzac? Another has been just published by him, "La Dernière Apparition de Vautrin;" but it won't do to read without you have read the others, because they are all one narrative. Here is the list: "Les Illusions Perdues," "Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris," "David Séchard," "Esther," "Une Instruction Criminelle." Balzac is the great artist of prose fiction—that is sure. It seems to me that the French beat us more in history than in novels. Have you read Lamartine's "Girondins" yet? I had,

in one week, letters about that book, from Germany, from Italy, from America. Thierry's histories are also magnificent pieces of colour; so are Michelet's and Thiers's; and I am now reading "Les Ducs de Bourgogne," by De Barante, a splendid history. Do read Lamartine—you have no notion of its vividness.

"Les Catacombes," Jules Janin; "Dix Ans à la Cour de Louis Philippe"—"Les Salons de Paris," by Madame D'Abrantes."

"Ouvres de Paul Louis Courier"—"Gerfant"—"Le Gentilhomme Campagnard"—"Un Homme Serieux," Ch. de Bernard.

"Jean Cavalier," Eugene Sue.

"Les Deux Dianes"—"La Vie de Napoleon"—"La Reine Margot," A. Dumas.

"Les Feuilles d'Automne"—"Les Chants des Crepuscules"—"Les Rayons et les Ombres"—"Ballades Orientales," Victor Hugo.

October 23rd, 1848.

I write at once, dearest friend, to say how very much I rejoice at what your last letter sets me right about. That would have been a grief. The domestic troubles are worries only, and will, I trust, cease wholly when you shall get a trusty upper servant. I can judge from Maria that your country people are of no very good stock; but, by-and-by, you will settle down into something comfortable. Above all, disregard tittle-tattle and interference. I should have escaped infinite torment and loss if I had not been driven, by

the tongues of the neighbourhood, into parting with K., of whom Mr. May says that she is the most judicious and intelligent attendant that he ever met in a sick room, and whose affectionate attention to me at all times makes one of the chief comforts of my life.

November 28th, 1848.

The sweetness and affectionateness of your dear letter, my beloved friend, really brought tears into my eyes. Sweet, very sweet, will the honey sent by your hand be to me, and would have been so even if it had not looked so tempting as it does. Your most kind packet arrived at the same time with that dear letter, and I shall eat the fine pheasants thinking of you, just as I shall the honey. It is very strange that the only meat I have tasted for many months was a pheasant sent me last week by Mr. Acton Tindal, by his dear wife's desire, and really I think myself the stronger for it, although I am always afraid to say that I am better, because I so often have had an attack the very next day after such a bit of boasting. Mr. Acton Tindal said that his dear wife had been poorly, but was sending him better accounts of herself, so that I trust on your return you will find her quite herself, and that you yourself will be the better for change of air and scene. Yes, dearest friend, I still cling to my castle in the air. It will be such a delight to meet for more than the brief snatches of visits, troubled by thoughts of parting, which we have had lately.

January 27th, 1849.

I am quite sure, my very dear love, that the delay of publication you are now lamenting is the best thing that can befall you. Write only when you have the impulse; correct and re-correct; blot and burn, and at the end of some years, when the time comes, you will find that you have a collection infinitely more valuable than any that you could make now. In the meanwhile, throw yourself into the works of others. You cannot imagine what a delight it is to me to be able to forget my own poor doings, and to plunge my whole mind into the great dramatists of James's day—Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Ford, or into the still more tragic reality of the first French revolution. I have lately been reading all I could find of that most eloquent of men—Mirabeau. Be sure that your leisure and your power of feeding your own mind are the most precious of gifts. The most splendid woman that I have known, Sir Isaac Goldsmid's daughter, never dreams of writing; but she is one of those enlightened readers to whose appropriation all writers look;—*that* is the far higher part, and would certainly have been mine, if I had not been compelled to earn money for the support of my family. Oh, how glad I should have been to have had leisure to read, and to throw myself into the thoughts and the genius of the great writers of England and France! In the meanwhile, dear love, write when the impulse comes, and send the Druid novel to Blackwood if you like. It can do no harm, provided you have another copy, for they are terrible losers of MSS. The "Gentleman's Magazine" is perfectly respectable, and with them

the antiquarian nature of the subject might be a recommendation. Pray go and see dear Mrs. Acton Tindal. I am sure that she is sincerely attached to you; but I fear for her health. I always have dreaded that her complexion, beautiful as it is, announced great fragility of constitution. She has many ties which probably make her an uncertain visitor, but I am certain of her feeling towards you. I earnestly hope that dear Mr. A——'s health will continue to amend. It is very probable that some such shock as you mention did occur, but he had been long overworked, which makes me hope that leisure may perfectly restore him. He and your dear mother are amongst the persons whom I respect and esteem the most highly in the world, and I have always found all who know them well, and whose admiration is worth having, join in the sentiment. You may think how much better I am when I tell you I am going to Paris. The journey is now so short, and so cheap, that the old prudential restraints are removed, and my enthusiasm for Napoleon and desire to see a great piece of poetical justice—such as it seems to me is the placing his heir at the Elysee—joined with the opportunity of meeting Henry Chorley there, who is going in March to be present at the production of Meyerbeer's new work, "La Prophète," at the Grand Opera, have tempted me into the journey. I shall be escorted by my friend Mr. H——, who was with me last year at Taplow, and who in the course of a very perfect medical education spent some years at Paris, and we hope to see a great deal. Can you promise for me any letters of introduction to eminent persons—orators, lawyers, preachers, artists, authors,

what not? Do if you can, and I will return the obligation another time. I suppose we shall come back sometime in May, and then I shall stay a week or two in London, to sit to Mr. Lucas. Shall you be in town about that period? It would be a great delight to me to meet you there, and I should have a thousand things to tell you of France and the French people. Ten thousand copies of Guizot's book were sold in Paris the first two days. This comes from himself. Have you read Macaulay's splendid work? He is to have 3,000*l.* a volume for ten years, and the work is worth the money.

April 11th, 1849.

After all, my very dear friend, I was not well enough to go to Paris. I had a recurrence of that terrible breaking down, under which infliction quiet is the only remedy; and I know myself so well, that I was conscious that a young lady might as well be ordered not to go to balls and operas, as I to abstain from good talkers in private, or great speakers in public, when they respectively come in my way. So, and because I have at least a dozen excellent letters of introduction, I have put off my journey till the autumn, when, at all events, I shall avoid the coming on of hot weather, which always affects me, and try whether this sad complaint will not abate. In the meantime my plans will depend to a great degree on Mrs. Browning. If she come to England, I shall of course go to town to meet her. If not, I still ought to go thither to sit to Mr. Lucas.

All, however, is as yet uncertain. You will have seen that she has a boy, a very fine one they say, and mother and child doing well. I shall certainly get to Aylesbury if I can—my double desire, to see dear Mrs. Acton Tindal and you, being reinforced by the wish to meet another most agreeable young friend. How is it, dear love, that you have never talked to me of your neighbour, Mrs. K——? I quite rejoice that you should have within your reach one so exceedingly pleasant and clever. I met her the other day at a christening—the only time I had been at a party for eighteen months—and was quite delighted to find that she retained so completely the cheerfulness and originality that made her so charming as a girl. Of all things that which I like is the sort of Beatrice humour which sheds its sunshine over every object in domestic life, and that she possesses in perfection. Mrs. K—— will be, like my friend Mrs. Hughes (Sir Walter Scott's favourite), young at eighty, and that is a great secret. I have been much interested by this terrible tragedy of Stanfield Hall.* One of my dearest friends has a brother married to Miss Jermy, and a sister, now dead, was married to the elder Mr. Jermy, and mother to the poor girl Isabella, who ran screaming from the scene. A very interesting letter from that poor child (about B.) to her aunt is in my possession. It tells the story most vividly. Mr. Jephson (the husband of Miss Jermy) was at Birmingham when the murder took place, and his wife so near her time that, when he was summoned to Stanfield Hall, he was compelled to

* One of the many fearful murders during the first half of our century.

surround her with watchful friends to prevent the story reaching her through newspapers or indiscreet acquaintances. After her confinement, he had himself the task of making the terrible occurrence known to her. It is not, I believe, generally known that Stanfield Hall was the birthplace of Amy Robsart. There are scenes that seem predestined to crimes. I am very glad indeed that you do not mean yet to publish; the time is unfavourable, and the subject would not be popular. All young writers succeed best in verse; prose will come. Have you read Mrs. Gaskell's charming story "Mary Barton?" I hear that she is as delightful as her book. She is still young, and the wife of an Unitarian minister. I forgot to say that my friend Mrs.——calls Rush an uneducated "Mr. Rochester." The phrase is, I think, very happy. I have just received two books from Boston in New England. One, "Sermons," by a Rev. Mr. Peabody; the other, "Leaves from the Journal of Margaret Smith, who landed in Massachusetts Bay, 1678-9." This last is, I think, a very clever imitation of the style of that day; so clever, that I (pretty familiar with the writers of that age) am not sure if it be genuine or not. I suppose they will be reprinted. I am expecting to see Mr. Ware, who has been some time at Florence, and is said to be a very interesting man. He is the author of "Letters from Palmyra," and other classical books.

August 15th, 1849.

I have been more shocked than words can tell to see the death of your dear and excellent mother in the papers; and write only to express my earnest sympathy and my true regret. You know how I valued that most womanly and devoted of wives and mothers—admirable in every relation of life, and a lady from her heart's core. I feel for you and for dear Mr. A——, my beloved friend, more than I can say. At this moment his own generous kindness will find the reward that good deeds sow for themselves, even in this world, by the continued attentions and society of Miss N——. When you are able to write, my love, just let me have one word to say how you are. Less than a month ago I lost another most valued friend, poor Lady Morton, who was found dead in her bed on Monday morning, having retired Sunday night in good health and spirits. She left a boy of eighteen, and a girl a year younger, to lament the irreparable loss of one of the best and cleverest women in the world. I have been shut up for three weeks with a violent attack of neuralgia, which has at last yielded to blisters, belladonna, and quinine. What pain it is! Heaven bless you, my beloved friend.

November 2nd, 1849.

I cannot let even one post go without answering your dear, affectionate letter. Would to heaven I could answer it with a kiss, and that we could sit with our feet on the fender this bright, cheering

January day, and talk away all care; talk till we were both as clear and beaming as the wintry noon! I have felt just like you. How much I missed your Christmas visit; but we shall meet again, my beloved friend; I feel that we shall. I am greatly better, which I attribute partly to your pheasants, and partly to my having found out a form of cocoa (cocoa-nibs), which makes a most pleasant and nourishing supper, and has greatly contributed to strengthen me.

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The two narrow scraps marked × have been written to be here. Of course, I have not mentioned the subject to anybody else; but I could not help telling you, the rather that you can hardly be charmed by the curious personage to whom they seemed to relate. After I have written my letter, I shall walk up and see Mrs. ——, just to be able to talk of you. She and her daughter always speak of you with great warmth, and they gave me most hearty pleasure lately by a much amended account of your excellent father. He even goes, they said, to his club, which is the salt of life to a London man. Say everything for me to him, and to dear Mrs. A——, and convey to them, and accept for yourself and Mr. P——, and the little lady I shall be glad to see, all the old-fashioned good wishes of the season. The feelings you speak of, my very dear friend, are, I believe, most common among the higher female intellects. I had them strongly. They worked off with me, first in a quantity of writing, then in an equal dose of the very best society at Mr. Perry's, where, for a

part of every year, I lived in the midst of all that was greatest and highest in mind and accomplishment. Then, for very many years, years of great anxiety, I plunged into an immense quantity of reading; then (for beginning life at fifteen, I was still young at this period), then came the writing for bread, the thirty years of drudgery, and toil, and harassing, over which nothing but the strong sense of duty, the overwhelming necessity, could have borne me alive. Mixed with all this, was a tendency to reverie, an undercurrent of melancholy, belonging essentially to the poetical temperament, and which we have in common, my only point of superiority being higher animal spirits, and a greater power of throwing myself into outward things. How else could I live as I do, alone, and yet keep up a cheerfulness which I have even retained through the most depressing disorder to which the human frame is liable? Cultivate, dearest friend, this interest in books and in people. Write when the impulse comes, get as much as possible into the air, and I shall still see you as happy as your high qualities and high gifts deserve to be. "Jane Eyre" is a coarse book, I think, and one to which nobody will return.* Our dear friend, Mrs. Acton Tindal, can tell you more than I can about the person whom she suspects to be the writer. That it is a woman, and a governess, seems certain. There is cleverness in the manner in which she makes both her heroine and her readers prefer the sinner to the saint. I have been much interested lately by Mr. Milnes's "Life of Keats." Do read that. It does one good to see in Mr. Brown,

* Curious, as one author's prophecy respecting another.—C.

Mr. Severn and Sir James Clark, much real friendship and goodness. If you want to laugh, read "Jerome Paturot à la Recherche de la Meilleure des Republiques." It is capital satire. But, practically, I am most interested in the new President. His election seems to me a grand piece of poetical justice. I know several persons who are intimate with him. They all love him greatly, and —— says he is the absolute impersonation of calm and simple honesty. *That* ought to keep popularity; however, it might have failed to gain it, and certainly his *début* has been most promising, simple, graceful, and manly. What a contrast that review was with its touching scene at the column, to the tawdry, trumpery procession of the Provisional Government. By-the-way, I have also been reading Lamartine's "Trois Mois en Pouvoir." If an enemy had wished to do him an ill turn, it could not have been more perfectly accomplished, than his own vanity has done, by republishing those speeches. That on Political Economy has an ignorance of the subject worthy of Louis Blanc; and there are little bits of spite, such as calling the Prince Louis Napoleon, M. Charles Louis Bonaparte, which are quite like an angry woman. God grant that the Prince President may prosper! There is no answering for anything in these times, and with the French people; but I have faith in the Napoleon blood, and the five years of imprisonment. By-the-way, you would be interested now, in reading some of the "Memoirs of Napoleon"—any but Bourrienne's, which he did not write; I'll give you a list, if you like—and Madlle. Cochelet's "Mémoires de la Reine Hortense."

Have you ever read Dumas's book, called "Le Corricolo?"—one of his clever works on Italy.

The "Corricolo" was published in 1844, and, I think, the travels had been really taken seven or eight years before. Do read the book. It is very curious. Dumas mentions the French ambassador at Naples as cognisant of his denunciation, and coming to the police to his rescue, in the middle of the night, and the poor sinner, Dumas, is so good-humoured, that I don't remember his ever speaking ill of anybody in all his volumes.

July 27th, 1850.

I have heard of you, through dear Mrs. A——, and have seen more of them lately than usual, owing to their having a favourite young friend of theirs, Miss ——, with them, which brings us together, as a visit from you would do. They will perhaps tell you that, after eight years' silence, I have again taken to writing a series of papers, called "Readings of Poetry Old and New," to appear once a fortnight in "The Lady's Companion," and, of course, to be reprinted as a separate work hereafter. I was really doubtful *how* I should write after so long an idleness, and somewhat surprised to find that it is, by general consent, held to be pretty much what it was twenty years ago.

"In Memoriam" is certainly very elegant (it has been written, you know, many years), and the large sale has been a most gratifying proof of the author's popularity; but to me, so many poems, all in one

measure, and all on one subject, proved tiresome enough; and I shall be delighted to find a poet whom I like so much, indulging in a little wholesome variety. I have a great distaste to Petrarch for the same reason; and really there are stanzas of Halleck's, on the death of Drake, that seem to me, for tone, manly grief, and perception of character, worth all these two hundred pages put together. I see so many magazines that I hardly know them apart; but I am likely to see Blackwood's English partner, who is a friend of mine, soon, and will ask him what you wish to know.

November 16th, 1850.

I cannot thank you half enough, dearest Mrs. P——, for your most kind recollection, and welcome present. I am so glad to hear of you, too; for, now that Mrs. and Miss A—— are gone, we seem to have lost the link that united us. I do heartily wish that they had stayed, not merely on my own account (though that is much), but because I think they liked the neighbourhood, where they were so much valued.

How is dear Mrs. Acton Tindal? Mrs. Tindal, I suppose we must call her now. Have they moved yet? Of course her husband's profession will keep them in or near Aylesbury. I had a kind basket from her the other day, but no letter; and, indeed, the very removal and dividing of property entail so much occupation that I cannot wonder at her silence.

Mr. Phillips was here on Thursday, singing a sort

of musical poem, out of "Our Village," or, rather, made *to* that title. Very beautiful, musically, it certainly is, and his voice as rich and round as ever.

August 25th, 1851.

Thank you heartily, dearest, for your kind attention. The books have arrived in safety. I believe that Hawthorne is the true name of the great romancer of America. He has always sent me his books under that name, and his countrymen, in writing of him, always call him so; and most certainly his works—I mean especially "The Scarlet Letter," and "The House of the Seven Gables"—are exquisite. The great poet, Dr. Holmes, says in "Astræa:"

> "I snatch the book, along whose burning leaves
> His Scarlet web our wild romancer weaves."

What a fresh dewy rose Phœbe is! Just such a piece of life, and light, and sunshine as the "Rigolette" of Eugene Sue, without any of the drawbacks of the French novelist. I hope Mr. Hawthorne will send us many such books.

October 19th, 1854.

I was glad to hear of you from your pleasant cousin, and should have been still more pleased to hear from you to-day, had the kindness of your letter been mingled with a better account of yourself. You have seen the preface to "Atherton." Well, my dear friend, from that time to about six weeks

ago, I continued to grow steadily worse. In the early part of June I became so exhausted, after a two hours' visit from a friend from Germany, that on being lifted into bed such a struggle for breath took place, that it was supposed to be the death-struggle, and the risk of such an exertion has never been repeated; so that ever since that time up to this hour I have sate, night and day, on a water-cushion in an easy chair, without rising from it, or change of any sort, except that I am sometimes propped up by air cushions, and sometimes have my feet lifted up on another chair. For three months, my death was expected from week to week, from day to day, from hour to hour. Then, about six weeks ago, I grew a very little better—that is to say, I did not die, but rather revived; and in that state I continue, my recovery, or rather my real amendment, being, humanly speaking, impossible; but my life mercifully prolonged by Him who alone knoweth what is best for his servants, and who has dealt nothing but mercies to me throughout this visitation.

I have told you this story, dearest friend, that I may add, that the greatest of the many alleviations of this long illness has been that I have been enabled by His grace to retain my accustomed cheerfulness and more than my usual contentment. My love of literature, my enjoyment of the breath of flowers, as I sate at the open window inhaling the summer air; my sympathy with those whom I love —even my interest in the local trifles, the every-day occurrences which make so much of the healthful enjoyment of life never having diminished. Think, dear friend, how much these habits have tended to

lighten to myself and to all about me the burthen of my infirmities: how much they have enhanced my grateful sense of the inimitable kindness which has met me on every hand—which crowds my little court with inquiries from innumerable places, and my table with letters, of which the affectionateness brings tears into my eyes! Think of this, dear Mrs. ——, and do not waste your own happy youth in vain repinings. Be assured that our duties are our truest blessings; and that the cares which I doubt not you will faithfully lavish on the father who loved you so proudly, and the interesting children who will, I nothing doubt, repay your affection a thousand-fold, will become comforts to which mere literary reputation is as a crown made of the rainbow. I have known you, dear love, since you were a young girl; and I now take the privilege of a dying woman to give my very faithful and very earnest advice. Do not imagine that I intend the slighest reproach. It is only that you have yielded to a constitutional languor, from which I would fain awaken you to exertion, to cheerfulness, to happiness. I have just had a most interesting letter from G—— D——. You know, perhaps, that his three eldest sons are in California, and have had to fight, in self-defence, the ruffian Irish—to kill three—the Americans being civil and kind. Dear Lady Russell is a sister to me. She is in anxiety just now for Sir Charles, who is with his battalion in the East. I saw your most agreeable cousin, with another kind neighbour, Miss H——. And now, dear friend, farewell! Accept my tender farewell, and my earnest good wishes.

Undated.

I cannot tell you, my very dear friend, how much pleasure the sight of your dear handwriting gave me, the greatest that I have experienced since Mr. P——, in a letter delightfully kind, and full of husbandly and fatherly feeling, gave me the happy intelligence of the safe arrival of the little stranger. Never mind the sex; for my part I think that the girl will be a charming amusement and companion, more than a boy for the first; there is nothing more amiable than a young elder sister. It was the thing wanting to your happiness, and I hope and trust to see you well, and gay, and blooming, before the summer comes to an end. Your anxiety about me, my dear love, is most kind. I have been wretchedly unwell all the winter, especially during the last three months. So weak that after a short walk, or a quiet drive, or even after a visit from a friend, I used to be obliged to go to bed, often at seven or eight o'clock, a strange contrast with my usual late hours, and of course the great shock and shake, mental and bodily, of such an accident as we went through, did not serve to mend me; but having survived that, I am now getting better, and do hope to return to something like my former self, and to come and see you, and Mrs. Acton Tindal before the autumn. What I am now wanting is a safe, strong pony under duty. My chaise (not so utterly destroyed as the other) has been repaired; but the difficulty of procuring a perfectly safe pony is very great. I am so lame that I feel I shall never again be able to do without some conveyance, and my excellent little maid has, luckily, not lost her courage. Delta is a

Mr. Moir, a surgeon, near Edinburgh, who is exactly as you describe, a writer of good verse, but no poet. Do send Louis Blanc's "Histoire de Dix Ans." It will give you portraits of almost all the famous people, and will show you, too, how wild and impossible are their schemes, and how false all their notions of political economy. I enclose a list, which I have been making lately, together with dear Mr. Lovejoy.* Our list is, I hear, much approved by the Inspectors of Education, and the London Poor Law Commissioners, and will have all the aid that government can give; but the machinery should be the parochial clergy. I left the choice of religious books to them. I am sure that there never was a time when that sort of education was so much wanted to inculcate sound morality, forethought, and prudence, and to keep out bad books. The very person at whose request it was written, had found a copy of "The Mysteries of Paris," in the clerk's desk at church!

No date.

I sent off very early this morning by the first train, a basket of flowers for you; thinking *that* a better mode than sending them to Farley Hill, where they naturally get mixed up with Mr. A——'s plants. You will find, dearest, some plants of the beautiful larkspur, of the small lilac, mayflowers, campanula (a little tree of beautiful gauzy bells. I have had thousands in blossom at once);

* A list of books for Libraries for the People—mentioned elsewhere.—C.

some plants of the large white œnothera, with a primrose-coloured eye, which I never saw elsewhere; and two roots of dahlias, one striped crimson, and rose-coloured; the other a bright rose, both our own seedlings. The first is a singularly true and *honest* flower, not always striped, but always of a most perfect shape, the other is more uncertain. I half hope that our soil does not agree with it, and that elsewhere it will prove as *honest* (that is the gardener's word for a flower that always keep true to its shape, and, I think, a very happy one) as the other, in which case it will be very valuable, from its fine colour and other high qualities. You know, I suppose, my dearest friend, that dahlias are, of all flowers, the most uncertain; varying according to soil, and aspect, and season; some liking dry summers, some wet, so that there is no answering for them in any way. These are what I have sent, it being too early for cuttings of any kinds, and I having been too busy with the subscription letters to get my seeds ready; but you shall have a grand packet of them against it is time to sow them, and we can let you have a dozen dahlia-roots, which will make a hundred plants (the two I send now will make twenty), provided you choose to take them on chance; they being seedlings of last year, not marked as to colour, and some, indeed, which never bloomed. But our seedlings were so very good that Ben, whom I never consulted upon the matter, says that it would well answer your purpose to have some; and as dahlias mix so well with evergreens, to take the chance of them. I tell you quite the truth about them, my dear friend, that you may decide, and can send them to you any

Saturday by the Watlington carrier, if you like to have them. Be pleased to let me know. You will, I am sure, rejoice to find that I go on unexpectedly well with the subscription. Nearly 800*l.* have been paid in to the different bankers, and I have reason to hope that several friends have kept the money that they have collected in their own hands, so that I may reckon it as over a 1000*l.* This is, for these times, a great lump, and the relief to my mind of paying the debts will be beyond description. They are to be paid this week, and there will be still something left; for I believe that many persons who have collected small sums have not yet paid them in. Did Hall tell you that we have the names of Joanna Baillie, of Maria Edgeworth, and Mrs. Trollope; the two last, I regret to say, are much out of health. Mrs. Trollope, in consequence of her having spent the last winter in the north, which has affected her breath, she will in future winter in Naples or Paris, and I have promised at some future time to spend some weeks with her in the latter capital. Tell me, dearest, *when* you come to Farley Hill, and let me know before your coming to see me *here*; it would be so grievous to me to miss you, and yet without much warning, it is so very likely. I so very often do miss those whom I most desire to see. The night before last I had a bad bilious attack; but am getting better. Indeed, considering all I have had to do, the anxiety, the excitement, and the immense quantity of writing (seldom less than from twenty to thirty letters a-day), it is a wonder that I have not been quite laid up.

Letters to Miss Harrison.

(*Later* Mrs. Acton Tindal.)

1836.

I have to thank you doubly, my dear Miss Harrison; first, for your kind letter; secondly, and chiefly, for the permission to peruse the enclosure. You do me only justice in believing that I regard you with no common interest. I was attracted by a strong degree of fellow-feeling—for I, too, attempted poetry at a very early age; and my efforts, such as they were, had, like yours, the advantage of being watched and fostered by a father singularly devoted and fond: so that I have felt—as I am sure you feel—how very much the legitimate pleasure derived from praise is increased when we know that the gratification will not end with ourselves, but will gladden another affectionate heart. Long—very long may you be enabled, with enlarged and strengthened powers, to afford to your father, and to all who love you this proud delight! there can hardly be a finer in the wide circle of innocent and laudable enjoyments.

I rejoice to find that Mr. Harrison intends passing part of the year in Buckinghamshire, and that the ladies of his family will accompany him; in which

case I confidently hope that in our own poor cottage we will cultivate an acquaintance, so auspiciously commenced.

1836.

I am exceedingly glad to hear of you; and I think that when Mr. Harrison shall have completed his building operations, and you come to live all together for some months of the year in Buckinghamshire, we may have the gratification of meeting, and talking of the Mr. Bulwers and Miss Landon; or, rather, of the older writers, whom I read oftener and think more about than of any authors of the day, except perhaps Wordsworth and Joanna Baillie; Scott and Miss Austen being, alas, amongst the illustrious dead. I have been much engaged since I saw you—I think it must have been *since* I saw you—in corresponding with a young man * who is engaged in preparing two volumes of "Memorials of Mrs. Hemans" for the press, and sent to me for what letters I had of hers. It will be a very interesting work, and do great honour to her memory; and to-day I have received a posthumous volume of her poems from her sister, Mrs. Hughes, the composer of "The Captive Knight," and many other of her songs. She has sent me also an account of poor Mrs. Hemans's last illness; and I have been deeply touched to find how often she recurred to me in the course of it, and that had she lived she intended to have published, and to have inscribed to me, a volume of prose

* Henry F. Chorley.

"Recollections." Great as this honour would have been, coming from a person so eminent for talent and virtue, I am not sure that there is not a quiet and serene gratification in the silent consciousness of such an intention, fully as soothing and far more pure, than the public distinction.

I am expecting a summons to London, to witness the representation of my friend Mr. Serjeant Talfourd's fine tragedy of "Ion," which Mr. Macready means to take for his benefit, in case he can find a fitting representative of the heroine. If he cannot, I suppose that plan must be given up, and I shall then postpone my visit till the middle of May—the pleasantest time of the year for London, and, unluckily, also the pleasantest time for the country.

Will you make our very kindest regards to Mr. and Mrs. Harrison; and tell Mrs. Gifford, with my grateful compliments, that her "Cookery Book"* is taken all possible care of, and will be of great use to my novel.

Reading, July 20th, 1837.

I told you, my dear Miss Harrison, that I had undertaken to edit a very splendid Annual, called "Finden's Tableaux." I did not add how sorry I was that the arrangements, which had been partly

* A very amusing old book of family receipts for cooking, pickling, preserving and drying many kinds of meats, fruits, and vegetables; for compounding the most extraordinary household medicines, and for distilling strong and fragrant waters, and making wines. A quaint extract from it figured in a note to "Belford Regis."

entered into before my coming into the editorship, were such as I then thought would preclude my having the great pleasure of including you in my list of contributors. To-day has brought me back a pretty subject, and an excuse from one of my poets, who has been unexpectedly prevented from contributing the stipulated poem; and (taking your kind compliance almost for granted, from my knowledge of your facility, and experience of your kindness) I really rejoice at being enabled to apply to you for the assistance which you are so well calculated to render. You will find your coadjutors persons of unusually high reputation;—the engravings exquisite —(the one which I send you is, as you will see, a proof from a hardly-begun plate, just to show the subject), and the getting-up magnificent: so that it is coming into the world under very fair auspices —to say nothing of its being a personal obligation to myself. What I have to request of you is a poem, not shorter than forty or fifty lines, and as much longer as you choose, with a motto from any English poet that you like, on the subject of the enclosed plate—which seems to me to represent a Georgian selling two beautiful girls for a Turkish harem. You may make a story to it if you like, or dwell merely upon their being torn from their country and sent to an unknown land. The terms which my proprietors have enabled me to offer, are £5, and a copy of the work, a two-guinea book. But the real advantage is the being included in the most splendid of these works with a very few (there are only eight writers in all) of the choicest poets of the day, and sure to be seen upon the table

of almost every rich person of taste in England; so that it is the very best possible introduction to authorship. The painful part of my duty is to hurry my contributors, as I am hurried myself. The whole of the copy must be delivered to Mr. Tilt, the publisher, by this day fortnight. Did you get a long letter from me the other day?

Reading, July 31st, 1837.

I have only a moment to say that I am delighted with your "Georgian Sisters." It is graceful, feeling, and spirited, and does not seem to me to require any alteration. The only question that occurred to me was, whether one would quite talk of their meeting by the winter fire; perhaps it would be safer (although very likely you are right) to alter these two lines, if you can do so without difficulty. I shall desire Mr. Tilt to send you a proof of the poem, to correct, and you can *then* add your name: also, if you have no objection, I should like the date to be added, Duffield Bank, near Derby. You will be enchanted with one ballad which you will find in the volume, by a very lovely young woman, about whom, if ever we meet—and surely we *shall* meet again—I shall tell you much that will interest you. She is the most remarkable person now alive; but I have neither room nor time to tell you about her now. Mr. William E—— (of whom all his friends seem proud) is distantly related to a dear friend of mine, Miss J——, who has told me a great deal of him. We rejoice in his success.

Reading has done itself honour by electing two Reformers. Make my kindest respects, and my father's, to Mr. and Mrs. Harrison, and thank the former for his kind postscript to your letter.

Three Mile Cross, Thursday, —, 1837.

I have only a moment in which to send you the "Tableaux." I hope you will like the book, and the company in which you find yourself. Miss Barrett's ballad * seems to me one of the most charming poems ever written; and Mr. Kenyon's verses are most graceful; and the "Death of the Bull" singularly vivid even for my friend Mr. Procter. I hope very heartily your progress in literature, and in life, may be as prosperous and as happy as I wish it to be: your father himself could hardly ask more. I myself am, and have been, very much out of health, overburdened with cares of all sorts, anxieties, and expenses without end—amongst others, the necessity of either moving from this poor cottage, or having it repaired over our heads before winter; which, added to the pecuniary charge, is enough to drive a sick woman, with a book to write and no money, crazy. However, there is something in "Richard's Philosophy,"—"Come what come may, Time and the hour run through roughest day."

* Either "The Lay of the Brown Rosarie," or "The Romaunt of the Page"—both written for Miss Mitford—both justifying the high praise expressed.—C.

November 8th, 1841.

Your affectionate letter, my dear young friend, has given me great pleasure; the feeling that my writings have excited occasionally in minds like yours—minds where ingenuousness blends with talent—is in itself a reward of many trials, and of much wearying labour. I am delighted, too, that you like our book. Two of the writers, Mr. Kenyon and Miss Barrett (E. B. B.), are very remarkable persons; the first, one of those first-rate London men, whose *talk* bears so high a value, and whose character (in the present instance) is as sure as his talent; whilst the second is a young and lovely woman, who lives the life of a hermitess in Gloucester Place, has translated "The Prometheus Bound," the most difficult play of Æschylus, in a manner that is the admiration of scholars—and who passes her life in teaching her younger brothers Greek. She, too, is much pleased with our book; and you will be glad to hear that it is universally well spoken of, and called *the* Annual of the year, as well for its letter-press as its getting-up. . . . At this moment nobody gets anything by poetry, and the highest works are printed to give away;—as witness William Harness's exquisite drama of "Welcome and Farewell," which might have been written by the author of "A Woman killed with Kindness" (old Heywood), and a copy of which now lies before me. Try to see another of Mr. Tilt's books—"The Authors of England," the memoirs written by the author of the "Memorials of Mrs. Hemans," and the portraits by *the new machine.** You will, I think, be

* The machine Collas—an invention at the outset much vaunted, and the cause of hot controversy. Owing, I suspect, to mechanical

much struck by these medallic engravings, especially by the exquisitely quaint and serried gravings of the different medallions. The Life of me is too indulgent and praiseful, but remarkable—as indeed they all are—for candour and generosity, as well as taste and delicacy.

Three Mile Cross, May 19th, 1838.

I wish Mr. Kenyon had taken the lead in talk. He ought; for although Mr. ——, next whom I one day sat at a dinner at Mr. Kenyon's, be, as you justly say, a most learned and amiable man, very refined and highly bred, yet his conversation, when compared with Mr. Kenyon's, is really like the song of a chaffinch beside that of a nightingale. The dinner is *made* that has him as a guest; and with all his raciness and brilliancy, there is an absence of all pretension, an indulgence to others, and a carelessness of himself quite unmatched among famous talkers. I am delighted that you should have made his acquaintance, and that you like his book. The fact is, that I like best (differing in that preference from the author himself, and from our sweet Miss Barrett) "Pretence," and the beginning of the "Dorchester Amphitheatre," which is delightfully piquant and quaint. Did you ever read his "Rhymed Plea for Tolerance?" If not, get Mr. —— to lend it to you. You will be, I am sure, much pleased by its keen

inequalities which could not be regulated, the fashion for its use soon passed. I doubt whether it was used for any purpose.—C.

sense, its fulness of meaning, and its frequent liveliness, to say nothing of a liberality the most charitable and the most wise. Did he speak to you of Miss Barrett? I fear greatly that we shall not long retain that highly-gifted young woman; her lungs are, I fear, affected; and the warm weather, from which Dr. Chambers held out hope, seems as if it would never come. She is bringing out a volume of poetry, in which the leading poem is a lyrical drama upon a most difficult subject—the effect of the Incarnation and the Crucifixion upon the Angelic Intelligences. It is called "The Seraphim." My learned friend, Henry Cary, says that the subject has never been touched except by one of the Fathers (Origen), and an old divine of the Church of England—a Bishop Andrews of the age of Elizabeth, whose works are, he says, as essentially poetry as those of Jeremy Taylor, and so scarce that of some of them there is not a copy in the Bodleian. Yes, my love, you are doing just right in pursuing that old-fashioned reading; it will be adding the very best manure to an originally fertile soil, and the fruit will be accordingly. I have not seen Mr. James's work, having this very winter read Voltaire's "Siècles de Louis XIV. and XV.;" but "Lord Kames" is an old favourite, and it is a proof of sound and healthy taste to love such books.

We have been in turmoil and worry all the winter. For many months I was very ill, and we were forced to pass that dreary season in a cabin—the coldest that ever pretended to call itself a house—and then we moved back, and found our garden a desert, and a desolation, almost all that the winter had not killed, lost and stolen by a lad who had lived with

us eight years, and been treated almost as one of the family; then we got another lad who knew nothing, and *finished* the little that remained. Then, worst of all, my dear father had an attack. Things, however, are now rather mending. As to myself, I hope I am in a way to do well. That is a very secondary consideration compared to my dear father's health—for he is all I have to cling to in this world; and we have a new gardener, and may get a few flowers again when the weather will let us. But it is a chequered world; for we have had a great grief just now in the loss of our dear old favourite dog, the most beautiful and noble creature possible, and my pet and companion for ten long years.

Reading, Sept. 3rd, 1839.

I don't know when I have liked anything better for a long while, my dear young friend, than your interesting letter. You are pursuing a line of reading very unusual in a young lady, and that *can* have no other end than that of producing an early maturity of taste and acquirement. I should like you to see a volume of poems called "The Seraphim," by Miss Barrett, one of the most wonderful things—or rather, the most wonderful—ever written by woman: she herself is, I fear, going rapidly to a better world. Dr. Chambers has ordered her to Torquay as the best chance of saving her life; but I fear she is one of those who are too sweet and gracious, as well as too wise and lovely, to be long spared to earth. Next to my father, she is the creature whom I best love;

and if it were not for my duty to him, I should go to Torquay to be near her. Her sweetness of character is even beyond her genius. Mr. Kenyon is in Normandy, with Mr. Southey and his son and three other friends. We see much just now of Mr. Hughes, a chosen friend of Sir Walter Scott. He lives at Donnington Priory, just under the old castle, famous during the civil wars, and the residence of Chaucer. Mr. Hughes is learned in the lore of the middle ages, and a person exceedingly to my taste.—A—— is a nice girl, but I cannot help fearing that her reading is far too slight and desultory, and that a spirit of criticism prevails in the house, which is the very worst thing possible for a young person, who ought to read few books, and those the best, and to cultivate a spirit of admiration—a far higher faculty than that of finding fault. My dear old friend, Mrs. Opie, came to see me the other day. She is literally a *friend* to me, and one of the nicest and quietest old women possible. I should like you to see our garden. It is very pretty and bright; and our new room is exceedingly comfortable.

Reading, March 7th, 1840.

I write directly, dearest Miss Harrison, lest, being very busy just now, I might be too long in answering a letter which I was more than commonly glad to receive. There was sympathy, strong sympathy, between us at all events; and your excellent father puts me in mind, in many respects, of my own when at his age—or rather when I was of your age—that I found myself drawn towards both by no common

tie. I don't think that I have written to you since my father's illness last winter, from a neglected bruise. Thanks to God, however—and, as secondary means, to the great skill of an eminent Reading surgeon, Mr. May—and his own fine constitution, he recovered so perfectly that he is really better and younger than ever. I had been out of health for a long while before, and the fatigue and anxiety consequent upon this severe trial had such an effect upon me, that during the whole of the past summer and autumn, and the greater part of the winter, it was more likely that I should die than that I should live. I am, however, now considerably better.

To turn now to my beloved Miss Barrett: she is still at Torquay, where she has spent the last two winters, not having spoken a word above a whisper, or been dressed—only taken to a sofa while her bed is made—since the first of October; nevertheless, she is not out of hope. Indeed, the physicians at their last consultation said that it was not only possible, but probable, that she would so far recover as to live for many years in tolerable comfort. In the meanwhile she writes me long letters at least twice a week, reads everything, from the magazine of the day to Plato and the Fathers, and has written (*vide* the "Athenæum" of three weeks ago) the most magnificent poem ever written by woman, on the Queen's marriage. Great as is her learning, her genius is still more remarkable, and it is beginning to be felt and acknowledged in those quarters where alone the recognition of high genius is desirable. If she do recover, it will be with no common pleasure that I shall present you to each other.

Reading, April 29th, 1840.

If I have not written to you during the last six weeks, my dear young friend, I must have seemed to you the most unthankful and unworthy person to whom great and gracious kindness was ever offered. But you will pardon my silence (for although I fully meant to despatch a note to you, I doubtless, in the pressure of heavy anxiety, and constant and most painful occupation, must have omitted so to do)—you will pardon my silence when you hear that my dear father, going to London for the purpose of negotiating with the booksellers respecting the work in which you have been rendering me much valuable assistance, unluckily set his walking-stick upon the newly-whitened steps of the coffee-room which he was leaving after his very early breakfast, and the stick slipping from the wet stone, he fell with all his weight upon the pavement, breaking his right arm and two of his ribs. Under the mingled feeling of faith in his own admirable Reading surgeon, and a desire to be at home and with me, he came down without seeing any medical man. Imagine the shock to me! and although he is doing well now, yet at eighty the accident was most severe and alarming, and engaged all my time, and care, and thoughts. For some weeks I hardly left him for five minutes, night or day; and even now my attention and attendance is almost entirely devoted to him. He can hardly bear me out of his sight, and will not be persuaded into the going about which would be so good for him, and is so essential to my wish of labouring for his comfort and support. Of course this has, for the time, stopped my plan; but

I think the book will be the better for the delay. It will, perhaps, be preceded by some volumes of Stories, but this is uncertain. Ten thousand thanks for all your kindness. I can only say, in answer to your most kind questions, Yes!* and thanks a thousand-fold! It will be the very thing. Truly, my dear young friend, we must contrive to see each other's face this summer.

Three Mile Cross,
Monday, (about) Oct. 1840.

I cannot but thank you most heartily for your great kindness in sending the enclosed most interesting epistle.

I am glad that you like Mr. Darley's† poem. He is a remarkable person, son of an alderman of Dublin, and disinherited because he would be a poet. I hear that he is a very elegant and excellent person, but have never seen him. He keeps aloof from the whole world, in consequence of stammering to a

* I offered to make some extracts, and to collect old poems and epitaphs for her book.

† George Darley was author of "Sylvia; or, the May Queen," and other poems; of "Thomas-à-Becket," and "Athelstan," historical plays; of "Nepenthe," an unfinished mystery; of many pungent prose articles contributed to the "London Magazine," during its short and brilliant lifetime; and, in later years, of letters from the continent—chiefly on subjects of art—and criticisms for the "Athenæum"—all of which attracted no common attention. Darley was happiest, I think, as a lyrist for music. One of his songs, "I've been roaming," set by Horn, and sung by Miss Paton, divided the favour of "the town" for many years with Horn's charming "Cherry, ripe," sung by Vestris, and "The deep, deep sea," sung by Malibran.—C.

degree which is most painful to himself and others. I should think him a most interesting man if it were not that his own disappointment, in not being acknowledged as one of the great poets of the age, has produced the most intolerant fastidiousness and determination to disallow all merit in other writers—such writers as Scott and Wordsworth, for instance, and indeed every poet in every language, except Shakespeare and Milton. He calls Miss Barrett mediocre. He cannot think so. He has written a dramatic poem—a chronicle he calls it—called "Thomas-à-Becket," which I think you would like, with the exception of a Saxon dwarf, called Dwerge, who is absolutely nasty; one should be glad to lift her out of the tragedy with a pair of tongs.—Mr. Shepherd is a most charming person, son of the late Chief Baron of Scotland (old Sir Leonard just dead, and many years deaf and blind), and husband to Lady Mary, the famous metaphysician. He is a friend of Mr. Kenyon's, and author, besides, of "Pedro of Castille," an unpublished poem, and of a most striking tragedy on the shocking story of the Countess of Essex. Heaven bless you, my dear young friend

Reading, Nov. 28th, 1840.

Don't you like the nervous lines of Mr. Shepherd? That gipsy poem reads to me like a mixture of Crabbe and Dyer. He has written a poem called "Pedro of Castille," which is really as gorgeous as an old painted window. Dear Miss Barrett is something

better, but I fear we dare not expect more than a few months of lingering life.

(About) Nov. 1841.

I have met with several very splendid persons lately, the most delightful is Wood, a son of Sir Matthew, and a very eminent barrister. I don't know when I have heard so splendid a talker. It is a combination of deep feeling, right thinking, high breeding, and very brilliant talent. Do you know him at all? We have also Miss Brougham in Reading, Lord Brougham's sister; she does not visit, but we shall be acquainted. Do you, or does Mr. Harrison, know her? she has the brother's talent, and something of his eccentricity. They say that Lord B. has been much shaken by the death of his daughter, the more so by the attempting to carry it off in public with an apparent stoicism. What a sad thing it will be if Lord Nugent should die;—never were such noblemen as himself more wanted. I agree with you that ministers have no very comfortable berth, the more so as something must be done with the Corn Laws, and then they will fall to pieces amongst themselves. We can match you Mr. Roberts in this land of saints. Indeed, intolerance, religious and political, seems to be their watchword. Have you read Blanchard's "Life of Miss Landon?" Poor thing! she would, I think, have been really a fine poetess, had she lived; some of her late lyrics in the second volume are wonderfully touching and true. The tragedy is weak.*

* "Castruccio Castruccani."—C.

Her death was a painful mystery; and removed from her early associations she would have become a different creature.

Never can we, my beloved young friend, be sufficiently thankful for belonging to good people. You are singularly happy; long, very long, may you continue the blessing of your happy home; some day or other I do hope to see it. I had an interesting letter, the other day, from Haydon, the artist. He has painted "Satan visiting Uriel in the disguise of an Angel," in fresco, of a colossal size—completed it in four hours; and Mr. Bankes, Sir R. Inglis, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, and other judges, think that it will be the foundation of a new school in English art. Our friend, Mr. Lucas, also made an extraordinary effort, having painted an exquisite portrait of Lady Burlington, since her death, from memory, said to be as like as possible. You will find Mr. Blanchard speaking of me as a friend of Miss Landon's. I only saw her once, and she having written to me "My dear Miss Mitford," and apologised for so doing, because she could not help it. I said, of course, that I did not consider her a stranger. This claim proves that she was not rich in female friends. I am glad, poor and powerless as I am, that I did write to her kindly.

Remember us both most kindly to your excellent parents. My father was speaking of yours to-day as a model of a tolerant and Christian Whig clergyman, and such he most truly is, and believe me, with sincere wishes for your sister's recovery, &c.

Three Mile Cross, Nov. 30th, 1841.

I am alarmed at your long silence, my dear young friend, and am but too much inclined to attribute it to illness, either of yourself or some one of your nearest and dearest relations. Your sister was ill when you wrote last. Tell me how she is now. I have seen nothing and heard nothing, but there are such things as presentiments, and I am half afraid to ask. Under all circumstances, be assured of my—I may freely say, of our sweet sympathy. It is long since we met, but every communication that has passed between us has been of a nature to increase the strong interest that an early intercourse inspired, so that next to Miss Barrett, the most remarkable woman probably that ever lived, I know no one of whom I entertain such sanguine expectations, and whose esteem and affection I more entirely prize. Let me hear from you, my dear young friend, and unless illness, or some sadder cause intervene, let me see the poems you promised to confide to me. Have you seen any of Miss Garrow's writings?* Mr.

* This accomplished woman, here somewhat severely judged, has been too soon forgotten. By birth she inherited rare musical talents—her mother being one of three sisters—the Miss Abrams', all whom sang in public with great success at the latter part of the last century—one at the commemoration of Handel in Westminster Abbey. A ballad now forgotten, "Crazy Jane," by Mrs. Opie, was in its day most popular, mainly owing to the manner in which it was given by this artist. She married early, and to a gentleman who was accomplished as a musical amateur;—and their daughter, Theodosia, early made herself remarkable as a writer of poetry, which for awhile divided the attention of those who professed to judge, with the contemporary writings of Miss Barrett. She was a great executive musician, and in her day (before Mrs. Tom Taylor and Miss Gabriel began to write) was noticeable as an amateur composer. She had a ready and a brilliant pen, and her sketches of

Kenyon, Mr. Landor, and several other of my friends, think very highly of her poetical talent—genius I believe they call it; but I confess (quite between ourselves) that I cannot join in their admiration. One of her most elaborate productions is in this year's "Keepsake," along with a beautiful poem of Mr. Kenyon's, and a noble sonnet by Mr. Milman, the gem of the book.

I have never seen Miss Garrow, they have; and I cannot but think but personal partiality must have something to do with the lavish praise bestowed upon her productions by judges so competent and generally so fastidious. My beloved Miss Barrett writes more and more exquisitely. "The House of Clouds," printed a few months back in the "Athenæum," seems to me one of the most beautiful poems in the language. I told you, I believe, of the death of her favourite brother, who, giving up every other object to reside with her at Torquay, went out in a sailing boat which sank in sight of the house, the body not being recovered. Of course this terrible catastrophe not merely threw her back in point of health—for some months she was on the very verge of the grave—but gave her a horror of the place, so that reviving a little this summer she insisted upon returning home

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modern life in Italy—to which country she removed on her marriage with Mr. T. A. Trollope—published in the "Athenæum," were full of observation, colour, and point, though dashed off with that enthusiastic carelessness of manner, which, oddly enough, seem to characterize the writings of most women who have treated the country—Lady Morgan, Mrs. Jameson, and even the more elaborate and matter-of-fact authoress of "Rome in the Nineteenth Century" (Miss Waldie)—not forgotten.—C.

to Wimpole Street, and accomplished the journey by stages of twenty-five miles a-day in one of the *invalide* carriages, where the bed is drawn out like a drawer from a table;—one of her reasons for wishing to get to town being the desire to be within reach of me. I left my father for two nights, and took the railroad, not having spent even an evening from him since last November. I found her better than I had dared to hope. While in town I saw Haydon's fresco—a very interesting specimen of a restored art, the first ever executed by an English painter. My father is very feeble, and requires more attention than I can express. He remembers you all well, and begs his kind respects to Mr. and Mrs. Harrison and yours."

(About) Dec. 1841.

I thank you heartily, my dear young friend, for your charming letter and the verses, which I return. First, let me say, that the intelligence of your good health, and of your sister's convalescence, gave me more than ordinary pleasure. I have lost so many friends lately—so many lovely young women and promising youths have gone off by that English pestilence, consumption, that what you tell me is really a relief. Above all I rejoice in the English and healthy tone of your letter, and of the poems that you enclosed. I remember being struck, two years ago, with your corrections, they were all such essential improvements; whereas the various readings of nine-tenths of your young lady versifiers are mere

alterations, neither better nor worse; showing nothing but a fidgety instability of character, and a total want of purpose. I have marked two or three words that should be altered—or rather phrases—because you can do so very well; that you should always do your best, correct again and again; write as slowly as you can—(not to lose ideas by mere dawdling)—and be very particular in diction and versification. The introduction to the Tales is very charming, and the plan seems to me remarkably felicitous; my only doubt is whether alternative rhymes will not weary the ear in a long poem; you may suffer the introduction to remain, but I should earnestly advise you to write the tales in the old heroic couplet—the measure of Pope and Dryden—and, let me add, of Crabbe. Another very fine sample of the ten syllable couplet is the "Three State Trials," by Moile* (a fictitious name),—I cannot find out who wrote that striking book,—and, with all its faults, the story, "Rimini," by Leigh Hunt.—Do read the "Three State Trials," there are passages of exquisite rythmical beauty. Indeed, for finish, and melody of versification, there is nothing approaching to Miss Barrett in this day, or in any other—also for diction. Her words paint.

I am very desirous that you should choose the most favourable medium of versification for your tales. Make the story, too, as pleasing as possible; generosity, gratitude, nobleness, happiness, form a truer and finer source of tears than the common one of sorrow. Compare, for instance, the fine conclusion of the "Lady of the Lake," with the

* The secret well kept to this day.

equally fine conclusion of "Gertrude of Wyoming," and you will feel at once to which poem we return. Mr. Robinson (A. Crabb Robinson) says that Mr. Wordsworth will, probably, gain about eight pounds by the present monthly edition of his works, published by Moxon. I don't mention this with reference to the money, which I know you would disregard, but simply to show how very poor the sale must be, even of the most fashionable poet; for you know, of course, that Wordsworth is now at the height of fashion as a poet, though I question if many people read him. He is a great name, like Milton! Mr. Milnes (certainly a sweeter poet, one who sits next to Moore) is only known by contributions to different Annuals, and extracts from books printed for private distribution; if his poems were published, they would remain upon the bookseller's shelves.

(About) Feb. 1842.

Dear Miss Barrett is, I hope, rather better; still, however, confined to her bed. Her last poetical effort was on "Chaucer Modernised," in conjunction with Mr. Wordsworth, Leigh Hunt, &c. It is a charming volume, and the introduction by Mr. Horne is, I think, the best essay upon English metre in the language. Every poet ought to read it, and you would agree with every word. Do you know Mrs. Sigourney, the American poetess? she is in England at present, and I have a letter from her to-day, from which I suspect that she is coming here. I wish the season were more advanced on every account; but

she must take things as she finds them. The Howitts are in Germany.

March 3rd, 1842.

I find that there is a carrier from Reading to Aylesbury, so that I can send you a packet of flower seeds, which I have prepared, should you think it worth your acceptance, and some American books, amongst which are the "Memoirs and Remains of Margaret Davidson," reviewed in the "Quarterly;" but not, I believe (neither are the others), reprinted in England. If you think these worth the trouble of sending for to Aylesbury, and the seed worthy your acceptance. The books worth reading I shall be delighted to forward them on Saturday week, addressed either to Dinton, or to the care of my tradesman in Aylesbury, which, as your post, is probably your nearest town.—I earnestly hope to hear good news of you all, my hope being mixed with so much fear as to cause anxiety on account of the singularly unhealthy season. We have had nothing but wet. Indeed the whole of the last year has been one of flood and desolation, and in this house we have suffered much. The strong, tall, bony woman who chiefly attends my father, being so useful from her strength in getting him in and out of bed, &c., has had, night after night, and week after week, fits of the most frightful kind; so that I and the poor little girl, who is my principal comfort, are black and blue from holding her, though compelled to call in half the village. Then a girl hired to help fell sick,

too; my poor pony has had the influenza, and will, I think, die of it; and last and worst, my father has had a fearful attack of English cholera, which has left him sensibly reduced and exhausted, that I am alive is a wonder and a mercy; since without me, what would have become of my dear father? But I bless God that I have held out. I read to him all day, and nearly all night, for it is his only pleasure, and yet (from habit, partly) he groans all through, and you can hardly imagine what a trial it is to read, much more to talk, with such an accompaniment. As I said before, I can only be humbly thankful that strength is given when so much wanted. May Heaven, my dear young friend, long bless you, with your dear parents, in health and happiness! Are you writing? I hope so. It is a grief of griefs to me that I have no time nor strength to earn money as I would fain do by humble prose; but my dear Miss Barrett is, I bless God, stronger and better than for the last three years. She is now printing in the "Athenæum," accounts, with translations, of the "Early Christian Poets," better known as orators and theologians under the name of the Fathers. Do look at these fine papers, if the "Athenæum" is within your reach, as it is probably taken in at the nearest circulating library; she has as yet only published two numbers, one of which was in the last "Athenæum," the other in one some weeks back. I do wish that you and this sweet creature knew each other, and I hope some day or other my wish may be realised. I owe my knowledge of her to my kind friend, Mr. Kenyon, to whom she is distantly related, and for some years back her health has been

such as almost to confine her to her bed; but she has borne this winter in Wimpole Street better than the two preceding, and that, I think, affords some grounds of hope that her life may be spared, and even that a comparative recovery may be anticipated; she now walks from the bed to the sofa, which she had not done for years before, and the brilliant and graceful prose of her last papers is in itself an omen of life.

March 12th, 1842.

As you do not say where I had better direct the parcel, dearest Miss Harrison, I shall desire it to be left at the post-office, it will be sent to-morrow (Saturday), and I only trust that the seeds may do credit to our poor garden. How I wish they were as pretty as love and gratitude could make them; and then they might say in their own lovely language: "How very very much we feel your great kindness."

Heaven bless you all! I am going to-morrow (by a strange coincidence) to Lady Madalina Palmer's, whose husband is related to Mrs. Gisborne, and who once brought her to our poor cottage. I shall take the admirable letter, which I have read over twice to-night to my father, to East Court, and leave it with Lady Madalina for a day or two, in case she should not have seen it, and if she have, I shall send it to Miss Barrett, who will enclose it back to you.*

* Miss Mitford alludes here to one of the many able pamphlets and letters on the politics of his time, which were published by the

It is really a privilege to read such a production, more like "Junius" in point, and sarcasm, and triumphant reasoning than any pamphlet that I have read this many a day. I thank you heartily for your kindness in trusting me with it, and shall double the gratification by enclosing it to my sick friend. I am sure that you may depend upon her for returning the treasure. I shall send, besides the "Memoirs of Margaret Davidson," the "Life of a Huguenot," and "A New Home, Who'll Follow?"* which gives, I believe, the best view of life in the far West—and Mr. Kenyon's two volumes, which, although nominally published, were, I believe, given away within the first few weeks of their being printed. Take your own time, my dear young friend, for returning them. There is not the slightest hurry. How very beautiful the epitaph in question is? May I ask for a copy of the lines which it suggested? I confess that my motive, one of my motives, is to send it to dear Miss Barrett, who already knows you by name and character, and would be so sure to love yourself. She has stood this winter in London bravely, gaining rather than losing strength, so that we begin to hope for improved health, for a change of room at least (she already walks from the bed to the sofa), and, perhaps, for even more. I trust that the approaching season may work still brighter changes in your

late Thomas Gisborne, Esq., M.P., during the twenty-five years he was a member of the House of Commons. A third edition of his admirable "Essays on Agriculture," which first appeared in the "Quarterly Review," was published, after his death, by Mr. Murray of Albermarle Street, in 1854.

* By Mary Clavers—Mrs. Kirkland.—C.

sister and dear Mrs. Harrison, and that your father and yourself may continue happy and well.

May 1842.

I cannot thank you enough, my very dear and kind friend, for your most gratifying and affectionate letter. Be quite assured that such trifles as wine are nothing—and that it does better, provided you have no objection, to write. At eighty, my father is privileged to dislike being put out of his way in the smallest degree, as company always does, so that I make it as unfrequent as possible, and the things that weigh upon me are not an occasional bottle or two of port or claret or champagne, but the keeping two horses instead of one, the turning half a dozen people for months into the garden, which ought to be cultivated by one person, and even the building—as I see he is now meditating—a new carriage, when we have already two, but too expensive. These *are* trials, when upon my sinking health and overburdened strength lies the task of providing for them;—when, in short, I have to provide for expenses over which I have no more control than my own dog, Flush. Nevertheless, I have hitherto been able to meet these demands. It is too late now for the slightest hope of change; and his affection for me is so great, that to hint at the subject would not only shock him, but perhaps endanger his health. Indeed, he often wants to spend money upon me, and I believe really deludes himself into believing that one of his favourite expenses—the garden—contributes to my gratifi-

cation; although last year the tremendous personal trouble in which it involved me greatly added to my complaint, as everything must do which makes such a demand upon my time. It was due to you, and to myself, to let you know exactly my situation: nothing else could explain the strange anomalies of my position, or of a state of health which, requiring the strictest regimen, has at once the appearance of strength, and the reality of constant precariousness and weakness; for even when I wrote last, I was again ill, and during the whole of yesterday was unable to lift my head from my pillow. What I have said, however, I now repeat. My dear father is all and everything to me; his life is much better than mine; but I still believe that to take care of him is my mission; that whilst he requires my services I shall be spared. None but those who have lived for one, and one only, can comprehend how entirely my life is bound up in his. During his illness, I felt that if he died I could never write again; that to preserve him, I would be content to be cast houseless and naked upon the world; and I believe that his feeling towards me is exactly the same. I will now tell you (in strict confidence) our present scheme, upon which he is going next week to London. Above thirty years ago, when a very young girl, Sir William Elford—then M.P. for Plymouth, a Devonshire baronet, and partner of a bank in Plymouth, but still a man of very old family, of education, talent, and taste, no despicable amateur landscape painter, and a man of considerable general ability—took a great fancy to me, and coaxed me into a close correspondence. He was a friend and

club mate of my father (who lost large sums at Graham's, in St. James's Street, at piquet and whist, of which he was reckoned one of the six best players in London), and even then an elderly gentleman. After I became an authoress, I of course ceased to write in a great degree. He died a few years ago, at the age of eighty-six, in the bosom of his family. He had always said that none of my published writings at all equalled these letters; and upon Miss Elford removing from one county to another, last winter, she collected, arranged, and re-read the whole of my past correspondence, and strongly urged me to publish it. The two or three friends, however, to whom I have mentioned the publication, urge the matter strongly.

Without being so sanguine as my father, I do believe that it will tell. I shall have a great deal of labour in putting it into order, for every line must be transcribed, and I shall, from memory, journals, &c., &c., add accounts of a sojourn in Northumberland (at Kirkley, the seat of the Ogles), a dinner at Alnwick, a visit to Chittingham, the Wild Bulls, &c., to Roddam, in the Cheviot, &c., &c.; also visits to Cobbett for a week, and a grand wrestling match there, Lord Cochrane, &c.; and accounts of Selborne, Littlecote, The Vine, and Park Place. All these last *are to be visited.* There is a quantity of material—indeed, I shall reserve enough for a second series. Still the labour will be very great, for perhaps every page will have to be rewritten. Now, this is all in confidence—of course, the new letters must seem old, and I shall have to put out all personal allusions. My great want is a title-page.

H. Chorley and Serjeant Talfourd—my only confidents except those I have named—advise, the one, "Letters to an Old Friend, by M. R. M."; the other, "Letters before Authorship." Now, Talfourd is right in conveying the idea of "the first sprightly musings;" but both titles are awkward, as both say. "First Freaks of the Pen; or, Letters of an Author before Authorship," seems better, but too long. Do help me, and give me your notion of the probable success of the book.

To-day I went into Reading, to meet Mr. Arnott, who, after all, was detained on the Grand Jury at Oxford, and there I saw Mr. Hammond's statement in the "Chronicle." Of course, if Mr. Wallack be on his way from America, he will know nothing of this before landing, and may be employed by the committee to conclude the season; but all this you will hear from Mr. Dunn. These letters must be now my first object, and it is lucky that they came on the carpet, so as to preserve my father—who had made up his mind to the representation of "Otto"—from a sore disappointment. Now he seems rather glad that it did not come out to disadvantage, and with a probable loss both of the play and any profit to be made from it than otherwise effected. I hope Mr. Hammond has reserved the Liverpool Theatre, *i. e.*, made it over to some one. I remember poor Mr. Hughes said that that was his best bread-winner. There is still a chance of Mr. Wallack; and if not of him, somebody may arise—*must* arise, as a tragic actor, in a year or two. Let me know, if you can, before next Sunday, what the chance of Drury Lane and Mr. Wallack is, and whether you think it would

be worth while to send the copy by my father to Covent Garden, next week. Now adieu, my dear friend. Heaven bless you! There is no chance of my being able to write any more such letters.

June 1st, 1842.

Once again I have to request a most material service from your kindness. The matter is this. On editing the "Tableaux," I stipulated with Mr. Tilt (co-partner with Messrs. Finden in the proprietorship of the work), to reserve to myself the copyright of the letterpress, I having always built my prose works on such a foundation. To this Mr. Tilt replied (as he admits), "By all means: do what you like with the stories, after our immediate purpose shall be answered." Accordingly, I contracted with Colburn for a work in three volumes, the first to consist of original matter, the other two of my stories in the "Tableaux." Imagine my surprise to find that, in the face of this agreement, the "Tableaux," engravings, prose, and poetry, are all in a course of republication, in monthly parts. On stating the story to a most kind friend, at the Chancery bar, he took the case to another friend, an eminent Queen's Counsel, who agreed to do what they could to redress the flagrant wrong; and they have agreed that if my kind contributors will write as follows to Mr. Marsh, 4 Hanover Street, Hanover Square, the presumed clerk of some person, house unknown, to whom Messrs. Finden have assigned the property, it will afford the best chance of inducing such a com-

promise as may be better for all parties, and less unjust towards myself. Miss Barrett, all gentle as she is, volunteered to do the same, and I assure you, my dear young friend, not only that no risk, or expense, or trouble, beyond writing the letter, can be entailed by it; but that the parties who conduct the case would not not suffer me to do wrong, were I myself so inclined. They wish you to say to Mr. Marsh that you have received information that he—Marsh—has just published, or has put in a course of publication, articles originally furnished by you to me, as Editor, for the purpose of an Annual, for that year only; that you have not parted with the copyright to me, or to any other person; that you have applied to me, and that I deny having authorised the present publication of your articles, and informing Marsh that, in default of knowledge of the person calling himself proprietor of this publication, you shall hold him—Marsh—legally responsible, as publisher, for the infringement of your rights.

I have just written above a dozen letters upon this subject, and am sick at heart when I think upon it, the money for which I had thus contracted being absolutely required. My poor father is become sadly feeble—forced now to be wheeled about in a chair, and so blind that I read to him seven or eight hours a day. I bless Heaven, my dear young friend, that you are healthy and happy—you and yours. God grant you may long continue so.

I trust Mr. Gisborne will be returned for Ipswich. That will be bringing good out of evil. How strange is the present state of parties in Parliament!

June 8th, 1842.

Thanks, upon thanks, my ever dear and kind young friend, for your unswerving attention and goodness to me and mine. Tell dear Mrs. Harrison how deeply we feel her liberality. Youth is so strongly in your sister's favour, that, in the absence of disease, I cannot but entertain sanguine hopes for her restoration. May Heaven remove from you that cloud, and every speck that overshadows your bright destiny! I often think of you, as amongst the happiest persons that I have ever known, blest more especially in feeling your many blessings. Heartily do I agree with you in preferring the solid, rich, substantial writings of the old divines, to the present flimsy intolerance. Such men as Hall, and Jeremy Taylor, had the imagination of poets, and that love of their kind, which forms the true basis of poetry. Besides these, I love learning in every shape. I think I told you that I had been reading this winter, with great delight, Hayley's "Autobiography." Do you know it? I have also been reading "Seward's Letters," and Hayley's "Life of Romney," and looking again over his charming epistles on history, on painting, on epic poetry, on self love; his "Triumphs of Temper," and three rhymed comedies, and two tragedies in three acts, "Lord Russell," and "Marcella," as well as his "Life of Cowper." It is astonishing how much that most learned, eloquent, and gentlemanly writer is underrated by this age, at least by the flippant and half educated persons, who call themselves the age—for so sure as you meet with a really cultivated and accomplished person, the claims of one who filled so large a space in the end

of the last century is acknowledged. He over-rated Cowper, I think;—still *that* life is a beautiful work; and his "Life of Romney," and the "Autobiography" (especially the parts that related to his son), are charming. Read them; I am sure *you* would like both them and the epistles, and "The Triumphs of Temper." For my part, I have no hesitation in preferring these simple, clear, graceful writings, to the mystical verse, and tawdry prose, with which the press teems. Hayley placed that unfortunate person his wife, at Derby, under the care of Mr. Berridge, widow of a young physician, his fellow collegian, and early friend. Do you know any traditions of him, or of Darwin? Hayley was (as I hear from Mr. Cary, the translator of Dante, and Miss Denman—Flaxman's sister-in-law, and heiress) one of the most delightful persons in the world. My dear young friend, Miss Anderdon, says that his house at Felpham, where he died, is a sweet hermitage? Mr. Anderdon was, two years ago, on the point of purchasing it. The fine place which he built at Eartham, and where he resided for twenty years, is still inhabited by poor Mrs. Huskisson, who keeps her grave open there,—a mistake, I think? Have you Hayley's "Life of Milton?" I am fasting for that, and for a volume of Tragedies that he published, and his "Essays on Old Maids"—the two latter are, probably, inferior; but I like to read all the writings of a favourite author, and Hayley is so to me? I am now going through Cumberland's works, in the same manner. Faults these writers had—but they were scholars and gentlemen, although the latter does not seize hold of my fancy, like the

former, nor was he indeed to be compared with him, either in verse or prose—in the latter, indeed, there are bits of infinite grace and sweetness. Do read what you can of the works I have named. Do you know Alfred Tennyson's poems? They are in the last degree mannered and obscure (I always doubt if these *dark* people know their own meaning), still some of his things, especially "Mariana in the Moated Grange," have great merit,* so that I have been pleased at finding one of the best of the new poems taken avowedly "from a pastoral of Miss Mitford's" —"Dora Cresswell."

October 16th, 1842.

I am quite sure of your sympathy when I tell you that three months ago my dear father lost, first, the use of three fingers of his left hand, then of the whole arm, then of the side. At first we had a bed put up in our little hall, and had him lifted into a low, open carriage, or a Bath chair, for the benefit of the air; but then came on a chafing before, behind, all round,—*that* has been given up, he is now merely lifted in and out of bed, and cannot turn when there. It takes five women to attend to him, and two men, besides myself. I sit with him till seven or eight o'clock, when the rest of the house is astir, and then I lie down for a few hours. That I have lived through all this anxiety and fatigue, so trying, is

* Compare this with the criticism in a following letter of February 27th, 1843.—C.

wonderful. But Providence is good and gracious even in chastisement, and strength is often given when so sorely wanted. I am quite alone, except for servants—and the servant who, for seven years, has attended my poor, dear father, has yielded to temptation, and taken to drinking,—think of this aggravation of my anxiety! Mr. May won't let me part with her from fear of the shock to my father, so we have *her* to watch; luckily I never left her alone with him, since he requires two or three besides myself to turn him, &c., and wants that every five minutes. Recovery, or even amendment are out of the question; but until his appetite fails, no change will take place. The clergyman of the parish reads to him often, and I of course during his absence; and his state of mind is all that can be desired. This is a great blessing. When I lose him, I shall be alone in the world, with nothing left; for the remains of a large fortune will, I bless God, hold out to supply him with every comfort, and to pay all debts, so that no reproach will rest on his memory. Forgive this sad egotism—my spirits are for the moment quite gone. I hear Miss Barrett has been rather better this winter, but is a confirmed invalid, the greatest amendment has been yet from her own bedroom to the next one. Pray keep the books as long as you like, and pardon this sad scrawl.

December 10th, 1842.

My dear, dear father breathed his last at six o'clock this morning. Nothing could be more happy and composed than his state of mind while conscious, or more free from pain or struggle than his last moments.

I am miserably desolate—alone in the wide world—but better in health than might be expected.

Reading, Dec. 29th, 1842.

Your kind and excellent mother, my dear young friend, has had the great goodness to send me a beautiful turkey this Christmas. . I cannot tell you how much I feel the kindness—both for the recollection and the thing itself—for I can touch nothing besides game and poultry; and of course I never shall think of buying such a thing, now there is only my poor self to eat of it. You will like to hear that my great grief for my dear, dear father has been much soothed by the singular respect shown to his memory. The chief gentry of the country sent to request to follow his remains to the grave: the six principal farmers of the parish begged to officiate as bearers; they came in new suits of mourning, and were so deeply affected that they could hardly lift the coffin. Every house in our village street was shut up; the highway was lined with farmers and tradesmen, in deep mourning, on horseback and in phaetons, who followed the procession; they

again were followed by poor people on foot. The church and churchyard were crowded, and the building resounded with tears and sobs when the coffin was lowered into the vault. The same scene recurred on the ensuing Sunday, when every creature in the crowded congregation appeared in black to hear the sermon—even the very poorest wearing some sign of the mourning that was so truly felt. I hear lamentations everywhere from rich and poor, and considering how very, very poor and aged was the deceased, and how utterly powerless the lonely survivor, there is a truth and disinterestedness in the feeling that is as touching as it is rare. A cast has been taken of his beautiful and venerable head and face, and an Italian artist is engaged in making from it a mould for a bust. It will be very fine. Accounts of him have been inserted in all the papers, and the editor of the "Annual Biography" wrote to me to request a sketch of his life, and to tell me that he had stopped the press for its insertion. You cannot imagine how much these tributes to his dear memory have soothed me; and yet my very dear friend *you can*—you, who so dearly love your own fond and excellent father, can comprehend what was my affection to him who was everything to me, and whom, from having for the last four years nursed as a mother nurses an ailing babe, I had loved a million times more than when he was strong and well.* But everybody loved him. Even our

* Of the sincerity of Miss Mitford's feelings expressed in this letter, there can be no question: as little, the extent of her hallucination; merciful, as rescuing her from bitter thoughts and re-

poor little dog lay by the side of the coffin until it was removed to its last home—lay there constantly night and day; and I am quite sure that the unspeakable kindness that has been shown to me is chiefly from regard to his memory—for his dear sake. Well! I will write of him no more if I can help it. Let me rather say how glad I was to find that Miss Margaret was with you; it seems a proof of improved health that her mother should trust her from home at this time of the year. Tell me, when you write, how she is, and let me know whether you continue to write the village stories of which you spoke, and of which I saw a specimen.

Heaven knows I have no want of business upon my hands, having had three hundred and forty letters to answer, above one hundred of them requiring details, and thirty-seven of them containing most kind and pressing invitations. At present I must stay here, for the next six months—until all my affairs are settled; but some day or other I *must* come to see you, dearest friend, and your interesting county. Do you know a Mr. Partridge, who has a living somewhere in Buckinghamshire, on the borders of Oxfordshire? He has married a sweet young creature; her father is Mr. Oliver A——, the Chancery barrister. If you see in the papers

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trospects, but utterly baseless on anything like fact, or the feelings of those who knew the whole story. Dr. Mitford was tolerated because she was beloved. The respect paid to his remains was not so much to them as to her. But that by the excess of her delusion, her own name suffered, has been elsewhere said. From none of the many survivors of both, with whom I have spoken, have I heard any other than one and the same judgment.—C.

an account of an attack on my pony chaise, it took place three weeks before my dear, dear father's death, when I was going into Reading (the first time I had been out of my house for three months) to inquire of Mr. May how to treat a symptom that had arisen. Heaven bless you.

END OF VOL. I.

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